



Luxor

A Guide to Ancient Thebes

Jill Kamil

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LUXOR

A Guide to Ancient Thebes

Second Edition

Jill Kamil

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Plans by Hassan Ibrahim



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(*P.2*), for example, always indicate first pylon, second pylon etc.

Cover photograph:

Karnak: sphinx-lined avenue leading from the ceremonial landing-stage to the first pylon and the temple complex.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

On the eastern bank of the River Nile, nearly seven hundred kilometres south of Cairo, there once stood an unpretentious village called Waset. It was no different from hundreds of others and as yet had no inkling of its destined growth into the pivot of a stupendous civilization. This was the site of ancient Thebes and of present-day Luxor.

Like peasants all over Egypt since the beginning of history, its inhabitants were superstitious. They lived much as they do today in many isolated rural areas, in villages composed of sun-dried mud brick houses separated by narrow lanes. Their lives were largely governed by the cycle of the Nile flood which they had learned to channel and to exploit. Because its benefits and its hazards came with untiring regularity, the lives of the people were similarly rhythmic, following an unchanging social pattern.

This enigmatic universe awakened speculation in the minds of the Egyptians long before dynastic times. The primitive dwellers of the Nile Valley, in Waset as elsewhere, devised explanations, at once naïve and delightfully imaginative, of the alternation of night and day, of the glittering heavenly bodies and of all good things on earth. The world as they saw it was created by supernatural beings who revealed themselves in the heavenly bodies. Atum, who created himself out of himself on the top of a hill that emerged from the eternal ocean, brought forth four children: Shu and Tefnut, Keb and Nut. Keb, the god of the earth, and Nut, the goddess of the sky, were one. They were locked in a lovers' embrace, Keb beneath Nut. Shu, representing the atmosphere, emerged from the primeval waters and forcibly separated the two by slipping between them and raising Nut aloft in his outstretched arms to her new abode. Keb and Nut were father and mother of four divinities: Osiris, who became associated with the Nile and the fertile lands bordering it, Isis, Set and Nephthys.

The greatest phenomenon of nature, the sun, naturally made the most powerful impression on the Nile dwellers. Though universally recognised as the principal heavenly body, it was interpreted

differently in different areas. The centre of the cult was On (Heliopolis) where the Sun God was known as Ra (the solar orb) or Atum (the setting sun). Under one priesthood he was Khepri (the beetle), under another Horus (the brilliant-plumed hawk). It was believed that he sailed across the heavenly ocean in a boat each day, from the pink-speckled dawn to the blood-red sunset. With the last rays of the day he transferred to a barge that continued the voyage through the netherworld, temporarily illuminating its darkness.

In these prehistoric times religious beliefs developed in separate and independent areas. There was a patron deity in each town or village: a deity to whom the inhabitants prayed for guidance, help and courage, a deity they courted with offerings, prayers and sacrifices. The names of these local deities bore no resemblance from one area to another. In the little village of Waset, Was was the local goddess; Montu was the local god of Armant some ten kilometres south of Waset; and Amon, who was later to become the national god, was at this time no more than one of the eight local deities of Ashmounein, a district of Middle Egypt.

In addition to the local deities evidence exists that even from early times there were a great many generally accepted religious concepts not confined to a limited area. The crocodile for instance, the evil spirit that dwelt in water, was known down the length of the Nile, as were demon spirits and lesser deities like the good god Bes who helped women through childbirth.

As time passed, commercial and administrative intercourse developed and largely incompatible beliefs no longer remained local. As a town or district grew, so the local deity extended its jurisdiction. The people consequently adopted a new deity and erected new shrines to him whilst maintaining the worship of their original local god. Sometimes a stronger deity managed completely to overshadow a weaker. This is what happened in Waset. The tiny local goddess was almost swept aside by the strong war-god of Armant, the hawk-headed Montu.

It is not surprising that the independent provinces of Egypt should have tended towards political unity. They slowly merged until two powerful states came into existence: a northern kingdom which largely included the Delta, and a southern kingdom which extended south to Aswan. The rulers of the northern kingdom had as their insignia the *red crown*, and their capital was Buto in the north-western section of the Delta. The southern capital was Nekheh (El Kab) near the modern town of Edfu on the left bank of the Nile, and the rulers had as their insignia the *white crown*. Each

state also had its own national emblem: the papyrus in the north and the lotus in the south.

During the long pre-dynastic years while these two capitals flourished independently, sometimes peacefully, sometimes clashing in armed strife, ancient Thebes slumbered. When the northern kingdom overcame the southern and the two were united into a single state with the City of the Sun (Heliopolis) as its religious capital, the people of ancient Thebes continued to live as did their fathers and their fathers' fathers before them: a simple rural existence where the annual flood was the all-important event of the year and the regular channelling of its flow the most creative activity. Little was known of activities elsewhere.

In the north Menes founded the 1st Dynasty and set up his capital at Memphis. After years of frustrated effort towards unity came the ultimate solution. The Pharaoh of Egypt was henceforth a god, the god-king of a single united country. And not only was he to be recognised as divine and worshipped as such during his lifetime, but his cult should be continued for ever after in a mortuary temple.

With King Zoser we pass from the *Early Dynastic Period* of the first two dynasties (c. 3100-2686 B.C.) to the period of the *Old Kingdom*, extending from the 3rd to the 6th Dynasties (c. 2686-2181 B.C.). Zoser, the first god-king, firmly established Memphite supremacy. In his reign vessels over fifty metres long were constructed for river traffic, the copper mines in Sinai were exploited, commerce was carried on with the Phoenician coast, cedarwood was imported from Lebanon, slaves from Nubia. And he instructed his gifted architect, Imhotep, to erect the first large structure of stone known in history: the Step Pyramid at Sakkara. But in Thebes the most dramatic occurrence had been the adoption of Montu as local deity and the erecting of modest shrines to him.

Then came the 4th Dynasty and the epoch of powerful monarchs whose great pyramids at Giza and Dahshur secured them undying fame: Snefru, Khufu, Khafre and Menkure. Only a strong and effective government such as that under Khufu could have envisaged and organised, as we assume that it did, the erection of the great pyramid of Giza, by one hundred thousand men over twenty years. This was the development of organised society under one controlling mind and it was a period of unprecedented grandeur. But Thebes was hardly affected.

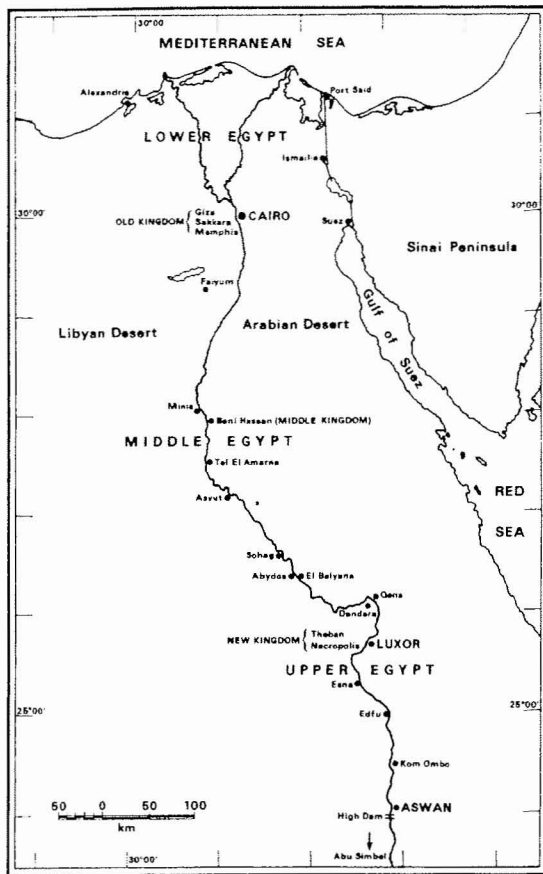
In the 5th Dynasty Egypt's civilization attained new heights. In particular her art reached a degree of perfection never known

before. Commerce existed with Punt on the Somali coast. The quarries of Wadi Hammamat in the eastern desert were opened. The benefits were being reaped of years of intelligent, single-minded and imaginative administration. But then something happened that was to have far-reaching consequences. The unlimited power enjoyed by the Pharaohs was partly passed to their officials, and the result was an inevitable weakening of Pharonic power. In fact the 6th Dynasty saw the local governors actually shaking themselves free of the Pharaoh's yoke and establishing independence.

And Thebes? Political awareness was dawning at last. After the fall of the monarchy in Memphis there was a readjustment of the scales of power. This was in what historians refer to as the *First Intermediate Period*, covering the 7th to the 10th Dynasties (c. 2181-2040 B.C.). Some of the independent kings in the north established themselves at Heracleopolis and others at Memphis. The disorganisation and weakness of the 7th and 8th Dynasties, which lasted for a mere thirty years, gave way to 285 years of Heracleopolitain rule in the 9th and 10th Dynasties when some degree of order was restored. Although little is known about them, the last rulers in the family line were powerful monarchs. And in the south power was seized by another family of monarchs, whose capital was Armant, neighbouring Thebes. Towards the close of the 10th Dynasty this family forced their way northwards from Thebes. Little by little they extended their authority, annexing local provinces and establishing themselves until the inevitable clash with the rulers of the north. The struggle was fierce and long and resulted in triumph for the south. Thus, after almost three centuries of feudalism, Entef and Mentuhotep succeeded in reuniting the country. Theban supremacy was recognised, trade was resumed, expansionist aims were reborn. And Amon was at last introduced to Thebes, not as a local deity, like Wast and Montu before him, but as the national god.

The *Middle Kingdom* covers the 11th and 12th Dynasties (c. 2040-1786 B.C.). The 11th Dynasty was Egypt's most prosperous era since that of the pyramid builders. The first Pharaoh over the reunited country was Mentuhotep II. Amenemhet I, whose rule heralded a time of great building activity and a literary and artistic revival, established the 12th Dynasty. There is hardly a town in Egypt, and Thebes is no exception, without some trace of the building activities of the Pharaohs of this dynasty. Goldsmiths, jewellers and relief workers perfected their skills, while architects

Plan 1: Nile Valley



raised some of the most beautiful temples ever known.

For some two hundred years Amenemhet's successors maintained a prosperous rule and Egyptian influence was extended abroad: along the Red Sea to Nubia and Punt, around the Mediterranean to Libya, Palestine and Syria, even to Crete, the Aegean Islands and the mainland of Greece. But though natives of Thebes the rulers had their capital in the Fayoum.

With the passing of the Middle Kingdom we come to a time of decline, the *Second Intermediate Period*, covering the 13th to the 17th Dynasties (c. 1786-1567 B.C.). This was the era of the ascendancy of the *Hyksos*. Coming from the direction of Syria, these tribes occupied Egypt at the end of the 13th Dynasty and ruled for over 150 years until the 17th Dynasty. The Egyptian prince Sekenenre and his son Kamose finally rose against the brutal invaders. Kamose's brother Ahmose established the 18th Dynasty and the *New Kingdom*, which included the 18th, 19th and 20th Dynasties (c. 1567-1085 B.C.). He completed the task begun by Kamose, finally rid the country of the Hyksos plague and began a period of gigantic imperial expansion in West Asia and the Sudan.

It was only now that Thebes began to develop. As befitted a new capital, the expansion was slow at first but it continued with increasing momentum until the one-time village was transformed into the seat of a world power never before witnessed. Military conquests and territorial expansion went hand in hand with an artistic and architectural revolution of unparalleled grandeur. Following the accession and conquests of Thutmose III, who pushed the northern frontiers of the country to the Euphrates, booty from conquered nations and tributes from the provinces of the then known powers poured into the gigantic storehouse of Thebes. The greater part of the wealth was bestowed upon Amon who, with the aid of the now influential priesthood, emerged at last as 'Solar God', 'The King of Gods', the great *Amon-Ra*.

The power of Amon was everywhere in evidence. Magnificent temples were built for him, elaborately embellished and adorned. It was both a duty and a privilege to serve him and successive Pharaohs systematically endeavoured to outdo their predecessors in the magnificence of their architectural and artistic endeavours. 'Hundred-Gated Thebes' was at the peak of its glory.

Primitive animal deities had long ago given way to variations of the human form with animal heads or, where the head was also human, adorned with plaited beard or characteristic headgear as distinguishing marks. Amon-Ra himself was variously represented:

as a ram with curved horns; as a man with a ram's head; as a man with a headgear of two upright plumes in whose hands were a sceptre as a symbol of power, and the symbol of life. He was sometimes depicted standing, sometimes seated majestically holding his emblems. Only the Pharaoh of Egypt or the high priest delegated in his stead were permitted into the sacred sanctuary of Amon, or Holy of Holies. And only on certain days of the year was the deity shown to the populace, carried in extravagant procession along garlanded thoroughfares. Amon guided the Pharaoh in civic affairs, granted him victory over his enemies, favoured all who served him. Amon gave divine protection.

When Amon was dishonoured by Amenhotep IV (Ikhnaton), who worshipped the life-giving rays of the full solar disc of Aton in place of the ascending sun Ra, this in retrospect affected Thebes but slightly. Although murals were defaced, shrines destroyed and the image of Amon hacked away, his dethronement was short-lived. Tutenkhamon, on succeeding to the throne, started the restoration of damaged temples, and Harmhab, Ramses I, Seti I and Ramses II continued the work of rebuilding, reconstructing and renovating the temples, to restore the reputation of the King of Gods.

Down the years Amon's wealth increased enormously. He possessed over 5,000 divine statues, more than 81,000 slaves, vassals and servants, well over 421,000 head of cattle, 433 gardens and orchards, 691,334 acres of land, 83 ships, 46 building yards and 65 cities and towns.¹

The arch-priests, already wielding a growing political power as a result of their very special reinstated position, gradually came to regard themselves as the ruling power of the state. Their long-awaited opportunity finally came when Ikhnaton's religious revolt was followed, in the 20th Dynasty, by a succession of weak rulers. This enabled Amon's priests to usurp the throne and for a time to unite priesthood with royalty. The days of Egyptian conquest were over.

To endeavour to date the fall of Thebes is difficult. One could say it started as far back as the 18th Dynasty when Ikhnaton, the sensitive, peace-loving Pharaoh who believed in a universal god, shifted the capital to Tel el Amarna and failed to maintain his foreign interests. One could date it to the reign of Ramses II in the 19th Dynasty when, in his concern to place his armies more strategically for his battles against the Hittites, he transferred the royal residence to Per-Ramses in the eastern part of the Delta. Or

¹ Harris Papyrus, written during the reign of Ramses III.

one could see the 20th Dynasty as the turning point, and certainly Ramses III and his ever-weakening successors fell more and more under the yoke of the priesthood and undoubtedly contributed to the collapse of the state. But the real downward slope of the graph, and its continued drop, came in the 21st Dynasty, just over one thousand years B.C., when Hrihor made Egypt an ecclesiastical state. Thus began the period known by historians as the *Late Period* of the 21st to the 25th Dynasties (c. 1085-663 B.C.).

Nubia took advantage of the weakened capital to gain independence. Palestine and Syria were lost. The throne was then usurped by Libyan monarchs who ruled for nearly two hundred years. They were in turn ousted by the Nubians. The growing Assyrian empire advanced on Egypt, plundering the capital and overthrowing the Nubian rulers. And though the country shook off the occupying forces during a short-lived comeback under the kings of the 26th Dynasty, the Persians invaded Egypt in 525 B.C. and the country became a Persian province. Then Alexander the Great marched triumphantly along the Nile Valley to liberate the country but actually succeeded in destroying the state's independent status once and for all. Finally the Romans turned Egypt into a colony.

Yet while Thebes was sinking into mediocrity, its conquerors treated it as a great city and tried to preserve and embellish it. The Nubians particularly, having assimilated the culture of Egypt and become fanatical adherents of Amon, sought to reinspire Theban culture and safeguard the city from collapse. The kings of the 26th Dynasty built lesser temples to Amon and bestowed their wealth, what remained of it, upon him. The invading army of Cambyses, though striking as far as Upper Egypt, actually did very little damage to the city. The rule of the Ptolemies is noted for its architectural activity and the Greeks conscientiously endeavoured to add to the splendour of national buildings after a priest had told Alexander that he was the son of Amon and should revere him. The Romans too repaired ruins and built temples in the traditional style, each retaining something of the earlier grandeur. But it was a losing battle. The past was not to be recaptured. Thebes could hardly hide its well-earned wrinkles and a time-weathered quality lay over the metropolis.

With the advent of the divine religions came systematic destruction. It happened first in the tombs and shrines where the early Christians hid. Later the "pagan" statues were uprooted, sacred sanctuaries mutilated, attempts made to topple obelisks and colossi and obliterate forever the visages of the 'heathen gods'. Ikhnaton's

acts were half-hearted dabbings when compared with this wholesale destruction. The city weakened and crumbled till it was no more than a collection of villages.

At last, as though wishing to protect what remained, the dry desert winds blew a mantle of sand over the dead city. Particle settled firmly onto particle, layer upon layer, until once lofty colonnades were half submerged in a sea of sand. Between the elaborately decorated capitals children's playgrounds sprang up. Mud dwellings were built by peasants alongside sculptured wall and column. Dovecots were erected on architrave and pylon. Ancient Thebes was gone. 'Luxor' was born: its name being derived from the Arabic *El-Oksar*, 'the palaces'.

Still the destruction went on. Slabs from the monuments with their invaluable inscriptions were torn down or reduced to lime. Wind and sun ate into the façades. And the Nile, rising and falling with the annual flood, continued to play its part in causing irreparable harm to the treasures of Amon.

It was left to the modern archeologists, who began to filter southwards before the turn of the 19th century, to excavate and interpret for us the golden era of Egypt's history.

Napoleon Bonaparte unlocked the door to the past. His 1798 expedition to Egypt, while militarily disappointing in its failure to wrench political power from the British, remains significant for its impressive archeological research and for the establishment of the *Institut d'Egypte* in Cairo. In fact it was to the Institut that the famous *Rosetta Stone*, discovered by soldiers digging a trench near the fortress of St. Julian at Rosetta, was sent. This stone was quickly recognised as some sort of decree written in three scripts and thus a possible key to the understanding of the 'picture language' which had been lost since the days of the Roman occupation. The bottom text was in Greek. At the top of the stone was the sacred Egyptian 'symbol writing', understood only by the priests, and in between the two was the popular script which was understood by the masses. However, the texts had to wait a full twenty years, until 1822, to be deciphered. The French scholar Jean François Champollion who worked on them for ten years finally established that, far from the hieroglyphics being symbols as was supposed, each picture actually represented a phonetic sound which, combined, spelled out words. Champollion compiled a dictionary of the lost language. It is thanks to him that we have an insight into the ancient religion, the manners and the customs of a people of

long ago and, above all, into the complex political institutions of a civilization that endured for five thousand years.

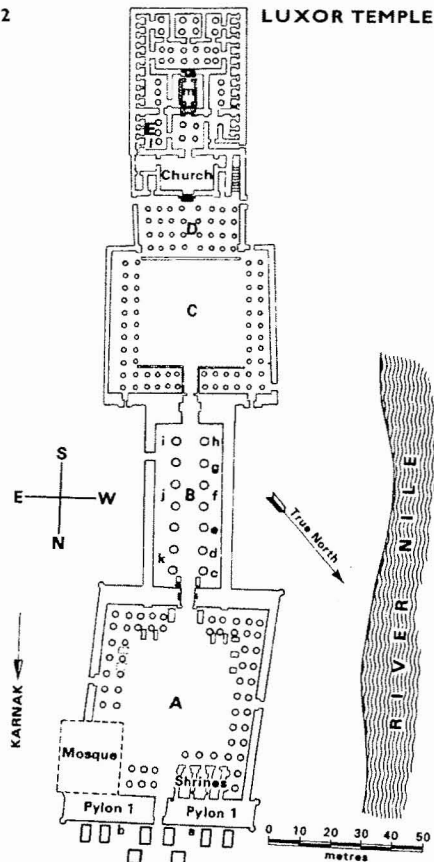
For many years excavation was dominated by the French. Loret was responsible for discovering the tombs of Thutmose III, Amenhotep II and Ramses I. His contemporary Belzoni, who has gone down in history as one of the most ruthless tomb-robbers, excavated the tomb that surpasses all others in size and artistic execution, that of Seti I. In 1820 he said that in his opinion there were no more tombs to be found in the Valley of the Kings. The French also gave Egypt Mariette, who revealed the delicately carved reliefs of Queen Hatshepsut's voyage to the Land of Punt, and Maspero, who was in charge of the Egyptian Department of Antiquities for many years.

As early as 1844 German expeditions were making such important finds as the tombs of Ramses II and Merneptah. Then in 1876 Emil Brugsch, following a local rumour, discovered the 'cache' or 'shaft' at Der el Bahri, containing a hoard of mummies of some of Egypt's most important Pharaohs, hidden there for safety from tomb-robbers by the priests of the 20th Dynasty. This fantastic discovery started an avalanche of interest in Egyptology. England's Flinders Petrie worked with his teams in the mortuary temples and in the Valley of the Kings for many years. Italy's Professor Schiaparelli excavated enthusiastically in the Valley of the Queens, and T. M. Davis, the wealthy American who excavated on the necropolis, said in 1912 what Belzoni had said before him, that the Valley of the Kings was now exhausted.

Then came Howard Carter and the most extraordinary discovery of all: the intact tomb of Tutankhamon,* discovered in 1922, indicating that the revelations of ancient Thebes had only just begun. As we show in our concluding chapter, work continues today on both sides of the Nile at Luxor.

*The spellings used throughout for the names of Pharaohs, deities, etc. are those adopted by Professor James Breasted.

Plan 2



CHAPTER 2 THE TEMPLE OF LUXOR

BACKGROUND

Amenhotep III, the 18th Dynasty Pharaoh and great-grandson of the military genius Thutmose III, built the temple of Luxor close to the banks of the Nile just south of the city. Though by this time Egyptian military power was past its peak, economic conditions within the capital were sound. Trade was flourishing with wealth pouring in from the distant provinces of the empire, which comprised almost all West Asia including Palestine, Syria, Phoenicia and the western part of the Euphrates, Nubia and Libya. Extravagant caravans brought gold and silver, metalware, ivory and timber, spices for the royal taste and strange and exotic animals to roam in private gardens. The temples were bursting with tributes, walls and columns were encrusted with richness and colour, feasts and festivals were bountiful, the pace was brisk, the mood content.

Amenhotep ruled in splendour with relatively little to concern him politically apart from a Nubian revolt which was quickly quelled. His Asian supremacy was unchallenged and he was confident that his armies were strong enough to maintain his foreign empire. At home his viziers took care of all matters of state and held the reins of power in their able hands.

Advantage was taken of slave labour from Nubia and Asia, and Amenhotep imbued traditional architecture with new life both by enlarging and embellishing existing temples and also by building new ones. Apart from the Luxor temple he completed the temple to Mut, in the great Karnak triad (page 65), which had been begun by his ancestors, giving it grace and elegance. Size was no deterrent, as can be gauged from the statues at the entrance to his mortuary temple on the necropolis, now known as the Colossi of Memnon (page 100).

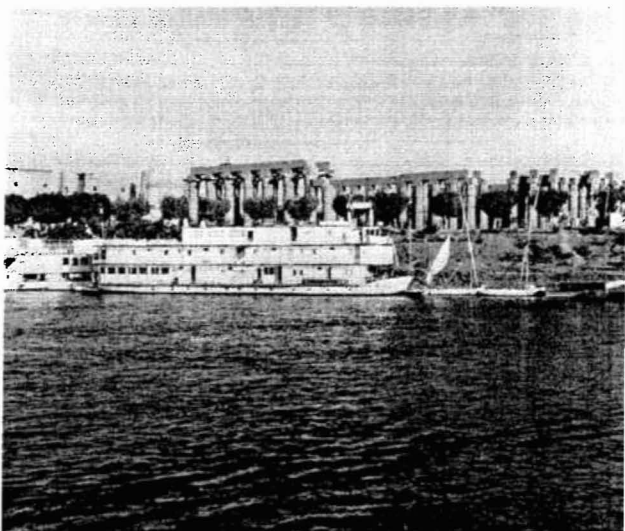
This was perhaps the most trouble-free time in Egyptian history. The country was united, the nightmare rule of the Hyksos was no more than a bad memory. The empire was expansive, slave labour cheap, wealth abundant and Amenhotep had every reason to be the most carefree of Pharaohs. He raised his bow to beasts and fowl

on his native soil where his ancestors had raised theirs to the enemy on alien lands. His wife, Queen Tiye, was very beautiful and clearly loved by the Pharaoh, as she is depicted in name or person always at his side and far more frequently than was usual for royal wives of earlier rulers.

In the circumstances it is not surprising that Amenhotep, architecturally active and emotionally content, should have developed an interest in horticulture. Near his palace on the necropolis his enormous artificial lake, over 1,700 metres long and 500 wide, was surrounded by luxuriant foliage. Between the temple of Luxor and that of Karnak he laid out beautiful gardens, lining the avenue with rams carved in stone, each with a statue of himself between its forepaws. The effect must have been one of overwhelming grandeur as solemn processions and dazzling ceremonies passed along this splendid avenue.

At Karnak Amenhotep III continued the new theme in architecture: the *pylon*, a huge stone tower sloping inwards from the base. A pylon stood on each side of the entrance to the temple. Thebes was never to know better; bigger, maybe, but never better.

'Isis' anchors beside Luxor Temple



Because the temple of Luxor, like that of Karnak and in fact like most other temples throughout the land, was built not by a single architect or according to a uniform plan, but reflected the ideas and whims of many successive rulers, it is necessary before describing the first pylon, which was actually the last addition to the temple, to have some idea of how it developed, underwent alteration, appropriation, calculated destruction and, finally, excavation.

The temple was constructed on the site of a small temple to Amon built by the Pharaohs of the 12th Dynasty. Amenhotep III had his architects rebuild the modest original sanctuary which was as always the first part of the temple to be built, renovate the surrounding chambers and design a forecourt of fine, slender colonnades. It is this court, with its clustered papyrus-bud columns, that can be seen from the Nile and that gives the temple its special character.

It was planned along traditional lines. Like all Egyptian temples it had a sanctuary or Holy of Holies with surrounding chambers, a large colonnaded hall—the *hypostyle* hall (Plan 2 D)—and an open court (C). A second court was also planned but only the huge columns of the nave were erected before the death of the Pharaoh. His son Amenhotep IV, who later became known as Ikhnaton and transferred the royal residence to Tel el Amarna, was far too hostile towards Amon to complete the work. At his time the temple was only 190 metres long and 55 metres wide at its greatest span. Three small granite shrines, which had been erected by Thutmose III, stood opposite the entrance.

And then came the first of a long series of changes. During the religious revolution under Amenhotep IV the temple was stripped of the images and names of the ancient deities, especially those relating to Amon, who even disappeared from the divine sign that included the name of the Pharaoh, the oval *cartouche*.

Ikhnaton's successor, Tutankhamon, transferred the royal residence back to Thebes. The wall reliefs of the Luxor temple were inscribed with his name only to be changed again to that of his successor Harmhab. It was probably Tutankhamon who had the walls erected on each side of the columns of the unfinished court (B) and had the inner surfaces inscribed with reliefs.

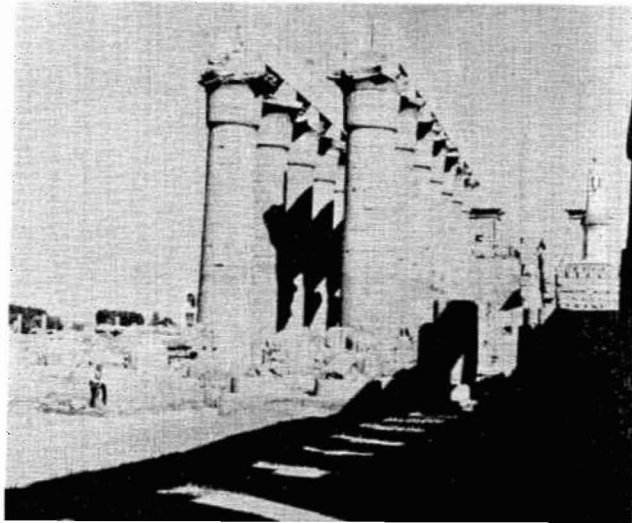
In the 19th Dynasty Seti I made a concerted effort to continue the restoration of the worship of Amon but added nothing to the temple's architecture. The major alterations were left to that great Pharonic builder and most celebrated of Egyptian kings, Ramses II.

His large colonnaded court (A) was placed before the temple of his ancestors and he usurped the shrines of Thutmose III, altering the reliefs to bear his own name. He also erected a massive pylon, two obelisks and six colossal statues of himself at the northern end of the temple, thus forming an impressive entrance to the whole complex. The temple was now 260 metres long.

Few further alterations took place until the advent of Christianity, when the entire area between the sanctuary and the hypostyle hall was converted into a church complete with altar in one of the enclosed chambers at the further end. The wall representations were plastered over and where the plaster has fallen off we can see a jig-saw of Christian saints and ancient gods.

One of the chambers adjoining the sanctuary, which was restored by Alexander the Great, was inhabited by the engineer who supervised the transportation of the pink granite obelisk from the entrance of the temple to the Place de la Concorde in Paris. It was the French who first started serious excavations of the Luxor temple and who cleared most of the mediaeval buildings about it. The exception is the Mosque of Abu el Hagag, which has withstood

Huge columns of the unfinished court of Luxor Temple



both time and argument and still stands in the court.

The Egyptian Department of Antiquities has now taken over the work and two of the most ambitious tasks are the reconstruction of the massive statues of Ramses II at the entrance and the excavation of the paved causeway that in ancient times linked the Luxor temple with that of Karnak. Protected from the elements by layers of firm clay, the sphinxes lining the road are being extracted in nearly perfect condition.

DESCRIPTION

Pylon of Ramses II

The main entrance to the temple of Luxor is by the great *Pylon of Ramses II* (Plan 2 *P.1*).^a In front of it are six enormous statues of Ramses II, two seated and four standing. Were these statues not carved from solid granite one might imagine them to have been cast from a pair of moulds, so similar are their solid legs, firmly implanted feet, square shoulders, clearcut features and eyes looking forward through all eternity.

In front of the seated figures were two pink granite obelisks. The one in position, now reinforced and repaired, has its base adorned with three praying apes on one side, and the inscriptions name Ramses II himself as the builder of this magnificent temple erected to honour Amon, blithely overlooking the fact that he was responsible only for adding to the entrance section of a temple that had stood on site for over seven hundred years. The other obelisk now stands in Paris.

The outer walls of the pylon are embellished with records of Ramses II's military campaigns, particularly against the Hittites of Syria in the fifth year of his reign. Ramses II was always anxious for his personal bravery to be recorded and his sculptors lost no time in pandering to his vanity. On the western tower (*a*) one can still make out life at the Egyptian camp (to the right) and the enthroned Pharaoh holding council (to the left). In the centre is the fortified camp with shielded soldiers and the Pharaoh himself dashing with his chariot into the fray.

The eastern tower (*b*) depicts a ferocious battle with Ramses II, still in his chariot, hurling arrows at the surrounding enemy. Dead and wounded lie beneath his feet and the enemy flee in confusion to the fortress of Kadesh from whence fresh troops appear. Kadesh itself is surrounded with battlements and the defending Hittite forces. To the extreme left, somewhat remote from the heat of the

battle, the prince of the Hittites may be seen surrounded by his guards and supposedly in fear of the enemy.

Court of Ramses II, Colonnade

Passing through the entrance pylon we enter the *Court of Ramses II* (*A*), to the left of which the Fatimide Mosque of Abu el Hagag stands in contrast to the solemn ruins of Pharonic Egypt. As recently as 1968 the local sheikhs, who claim that the tomb of the saint himself lies here, took advantage of a quiet tourist-free period, when many Egyptologists had escaped from the summer heat, to add an extension to the rear portion of the mosque, built, it will be seen, on ever weakening foundations. The height of the mosque above the stone courtyard indicates the height to which the temple was buried in sand.

The court itself is surrounded by smooth-shafted papyrus-columns with lotus-bud capitals. Standing colossi of Ramses II were placed between the first row of columns in the southern half. On each side of the doorway are a further two statues of the Pharaoh wrought in red and black granite. The one on the left has

Statues of Ramses II, Amon and his consort Mut, Temple of Luxor.



^a *P.1*, etc. refers throughout to the first pylon, etc.

a fine statue of Queen Nefer-tari, his wife, carved near the Pharaoh's right leg. On the throne is a representation of the two Niles binding the symbols of Upper and Lower Egypt: the lotus and papyrus plants.

Adjoining the western tower of the entrance pylon (*P.1*) is a raised platform comprising three chambers. This was the granite shrine originally built by Thutmose III and restored by Ramses II. The chambers were dedicated to Amon, Mut and the Moon God Khonsu. Four papyrus columns form a colonnade on the side facing the court.

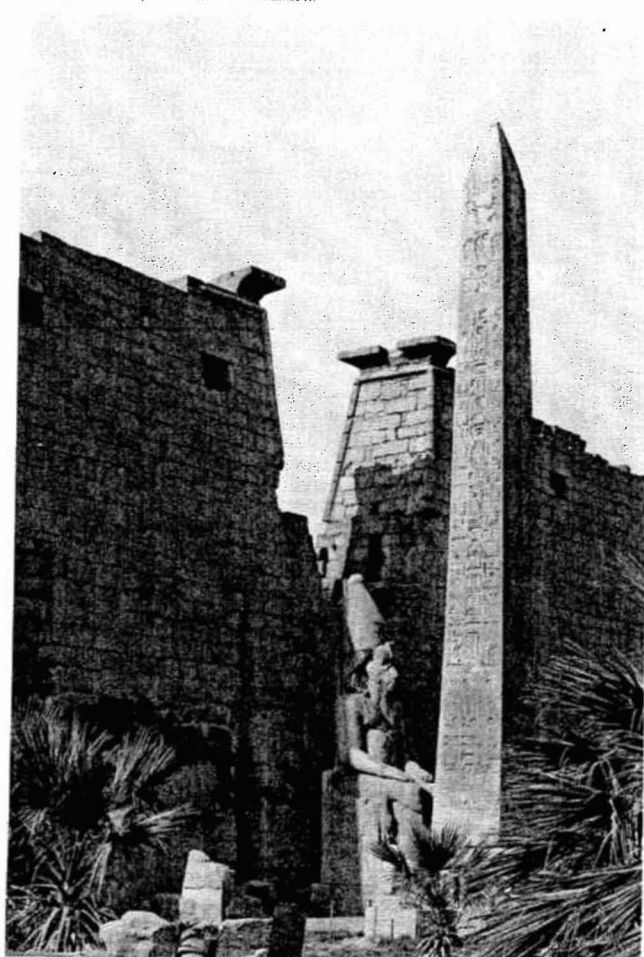
The reliefs and inscriptions which adorn the walls of the court date from the reign of Ramses II. They represent sacrifices and hymns to the gods, and all Ramses II's family, his many wives and a horde of princes and princesses are depicted on the walls.

The *Colonnade (B)* was built by Amenhotep III. In the early morning and towards sunset heavy shadows are cast between the seven pairs of columns and the interplay of light has long been exploited by photographers as it slants from heavy architrave to calyx capitals and down the slender shafts of the columns. Though Amenhotep III conceived the idea of this colonnade, Tutankhamon, Harmhab, Seti I, Ramses II and Seti II also recorded their names there. It was Tutankhamon however who had the walls embellished with the reliefs representing the Great New Year Festival, the *Opet*, when the god Amon visited his southern harem. The sacred barges were brought in splendid procession from Karnak to the Luxor temple, borne on the shoulders of white-robed priests from the temple to the river, and then towed upstream in a splendid and majestic procession. The festival took place at the height of the Nile flood and continued for twenty-four days of merry-making. Unhappily much of the relief work has been destroyed but there is still sufficient to take us back to what must have been not only a significant but a lavish religious celebration.

On the right-hand wall starting at (*c*) are preparations for the occasion, which include a rehearsal by dancing girls. The procession begins at the gate of the Karnak temple (*d*), which is complete with flagstaffs and from whence white-robed priests bear the sacred barge of Amon down to the water's edge. An enthusiastic audience (*e*) claps hands in unison and at (*f*) the boat in the water is being towed upstream by those on shore. A sacrifice of slaughtered animals (*g*) is followed by a group of acrobats, and finally offerings are made to Amon, Mut and Khonsu at the Luxor temple (*h*).

On the opposite wall are scenes of the return procession, including

Entrance to Luxor Temple. Pylon and obelisk of Ramses II.



(i) sacrificial bulls being led to the scene accompanied by soldiers, standard-bearers, dancers and negro slaves who are roused to frenzy by the pomp, the barges floating downstream (j) and the final sacrifice and offerings of flowers to Amon and Mut at the Karnak temple (k).

It is interesting to learn that Harmhab, the general, took advantage of the Opet to introduce himself to the populace as the next Pharaoh of Egypt at the beginning of the 19th Dynasty. Once he had been led through the streets by the priests and entered into the sacred precincts of Karnak, any question by the people as to why a man of non-royal lineage should become Pharaoh was stilled in advance. The occasion was too joyous to spoil with matters already decided by the high priests of Amon.

A fascinating cross-current in the tide of fate has led today's Muslim *Moulid*, celebrated each year during the month of *Shaaban*, closely to resemble the Opet. Muslim sheikhs emerge from the Mosque of Abu el Hagag bearing three small sailing boats which they place on carriages to traverse the city. The city is bedecked with flowers, and dancing and clapping greet the procession.

Court of Amenhotep III

South of the colonnade is the Court of Amenhotep III (C). To the left of the entrance are three seated statues of Ramses II, Amon and Mut. The court has a double row of columns on each side and is a fine example of the architecture of Egypt's golden age. The columns are of exquisite proportion. They have clustered papyrus-bud capitals and are in a good state of repair. The doorway through which we have just passed was the entrance to the temple in Amenhotep III's reign and the sphinx-lined avenue commenced from this point.

Hypostyle Hall

Adjoining the court to the south is the Hypostyle Hall (D), comprising gigantic columns arranged in four rows of eight columns each. The hall stands today as a somewhat cheerless ruin, though the walls still have reliefs of Amenhotep III before the Theban deities. The columns bear the cartouches of Ramses IV, Ramses VI, Ramses II and Seti I, mentioning the repairs carried out in their respective reigns.

To the left of the hypostyle hall stands an altar bearing Latin inscriptions dedicated to the Emperor Augustus. Adjoining the rear wall (to left and right) are two small shrines, one to Mut and

Statue of Ramses II Temple of Luxor.



one to Khonsu. The section leading off the rear originally had eight columns, which were removed when the area was converted into a church. The doorway to the sanctuary was walled into a curved recess flanked by two granite Corinthian columns, and the exquisite 18th Dynasty reliefs were plastered over and painted with Christian themes. In places where the stucco has fallen off one can see the reliefs of Amenhotep beneath.

Birth Room

Several small chambers surround the sanctuary, including what has become known as the Birth Room (*E*). Though in poor condition the murals are of special interest because they depict the birth of Amenhotep III.

The Egyptian Pharaoh was the embodiment of Horus, the son of Ra or Amon. But he had, in addition, to be of direct royal lineage through his father and royal consort. If, as in the case of Amenhotep III, whose mother was not of royal Egyptian blood, his accession was not considered legitimate, he could overcome this difficulty by marrying a sister of royal lineage. Amenhotep did not do this. It was necessary for him therefore to consolidate his monarchy in other respects. Queen Hatshepsut had already shown him how. In her mortuary temple she depicted how she ruled by divine right of Amon and was, in fact, a direct descendant of the Sun God Amon-Ra (page 82). In his temple at Luxor Amenhotep also showed that he was the son of the divine, begotten of Amon and born under the protection of the gods.

The story of the birth room is depicted in three rows on the left-hand wall (*I*). From left to right in the lower row the god Khnum moulds two infants, Amenhotep and his guardian spirit or *ka*, and fashions them on a potter's wheel. The goddess Isis sits opposite. Amenhotep's mother is embraced by Isis in the presence of Amon. In the centre row Amon is led by the ibis-headed god of wisdom to the queen's bedchamber where he approaches her to beget the child already moulded by Khnum. The pregnancy and confinement are attended by Bes and Thoueris, the patron deities of childbirth. After the delivery Amon stands with the child in his arms in the presence of Hathor and Mut. On the much-damaged top row are the suckling of the infant king, his guardian spirits, and his presentation to Amon by Horus who promises him 'millions of years like Ra'. In the corner the grown Amenhotep stands as king.

In all other reliefs of this chamber Amenhotep is blessed by the various deities.

Sanctuary of Alexander the Great

We now come to what has become known as the Sanctuary of Alexander the Great (*m*), the area entirely rebuilt by him. He removed the four original columns and placed a shrine in their stead. Both the inner and the outer walls have reliefs representing Alexander before Amon and other deities. He obligingly left unmolested some reliefs of Amenhotep III before various Theban deities.

In the sanctuary stood the gold-plated statue of Amon. To imbue it with life each day the priests of Amon carried out a series of rituals. Those carried out at dawn were the most elaborate. The statue was first carefully cleansed. Then it was clothed with garments and anointed with perfumes. The eyes were made up and prayers were chanted. Then just as painstakingly the clothing and makeup were removed and the priests humbly withdrew.

The chambers at the rear of the temple are of little significance. One to the north has four clustered papyrus columns and three rows of wall reliefs showing Amenhotep before Amon and other deities; another was a sanctuary with twelve columns.

Court of Amenhotep III, Luxor Temple.



TRADITIONALISM OF EGYPTIAN DESIGN

In order to appreciate mural design and execution it must be stressed that it was an age-old tradition, not an art form. The Egyptian painter or sculptor was not an independent or inspired creator. He was a craftsman who was part of a team which included masons, draughtsmen, jewellers and metal-workers. They all worked anonymously. Their creations were designed not for artistic appraisal nor, apart from a few exceptions, for aesthetic purposes. They formed a factory of artisans reproducing approved traditional themes with amazing accuracy. Statues for tomb or shrine were never to be seen, except by the Pharaoh or high priest, and these had a religious function. They were believed to be infused with the divine spirit of the one portrayed. Statues of the Pharaoh in open court or temple front were placed there so that the populace could gaze on the great Pharaoh who was under the protection of the gods. Praising him and praising God were one and the same thing. Amon guided the Pharaoh and the Pharaoh guided the people. This is the reason why the Egyptian monarch was repeatedly and untiringly shown in consort with the various deities. With the help of Amon, his power was absolute. The people voiced no opinions on the one hand, while he showed no weakness on the other. He was always represented in the prime of life, in powerful, confident, unbending majesty. The Pharaoh was above hopes or pleasures, fears or sufferings. In all statues and mural portrayals he was indisputably idealised and stereotyped. The torso, legs, arms and position of the head of the Pharaohs of the passing dynasties differed little. But there were subtle differences in their physiognomies. Chephren of the 4th Dynasty for example had a decidedly more prominent lower jaw than his successor Mykerinus. And the lips and dents by the side of Ramses II's mouth are very different from those of Seti I, whose features are somehow finer.

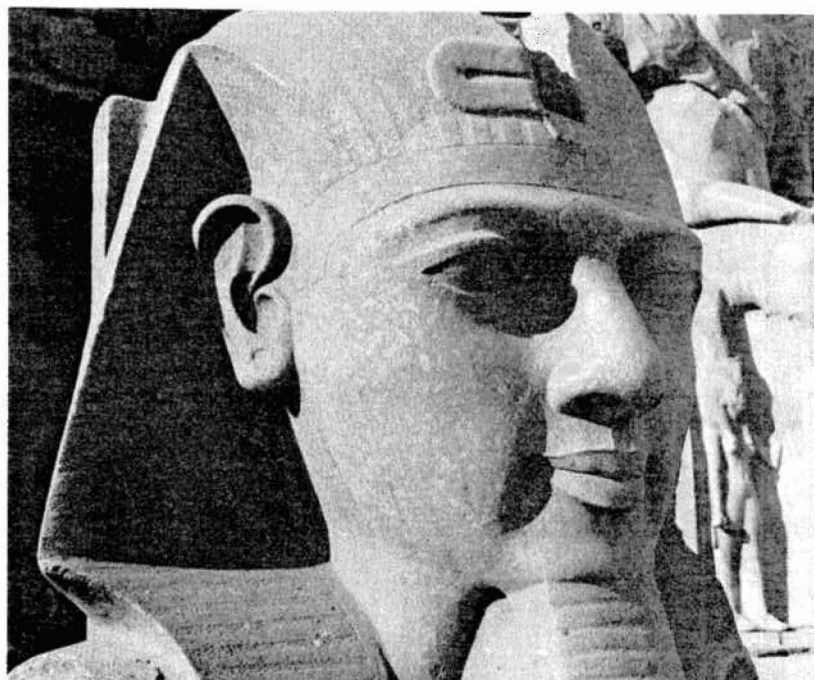
It has already been noted that the distinctive characteristics of Amon, when he was not depicted as a ram with curled horns or as a man with a ram's head, were his plaited beard, his two upright plumes, his sceptre and symbol of life. The Pharaoh in turn also has characteristics: a cobra (guardian against evil) which coiled around his forehead, and a special skirt falling into a triangle in front. The decorated belt that held this in position was sometimes covered with beads or embroidery and the tail of an ox (symbol of power) was attached to it. He carried his sceptre. Etiquette was

apparently carefully observed. Religious ceremonies, jubilees and other rituals, which grew more complex as time passed, conformed not only in general practice but in the most strict observance of rules and dress. Each detail has been brought down to us in the work of the relief sculptors.

Just as traditional ceremonies and rituals continued from generation to generation with very little basic change, so did the execution of mural records of the occasions become more and more stylized. The few realistic details which made their way into the representations, even as far back as the Old Kingdom, are seen repeated from dynasty to dynasty, even though they are somewhat irrelevant in terms of the symbolic and primitive purpose of the work. By the 18th Dynasty there was a knowledge of perspective and foreshortening but the relief sculptors did not try to improvise. The detail of a knee-cap, the muscles of an arm or a collar-bone were their only touches of realism.

Apart from the relatively short break with tradition under Ikhnaton, only the efficiency and maturity of the work changed with the years. In the Luxor temple the divine immobility of the

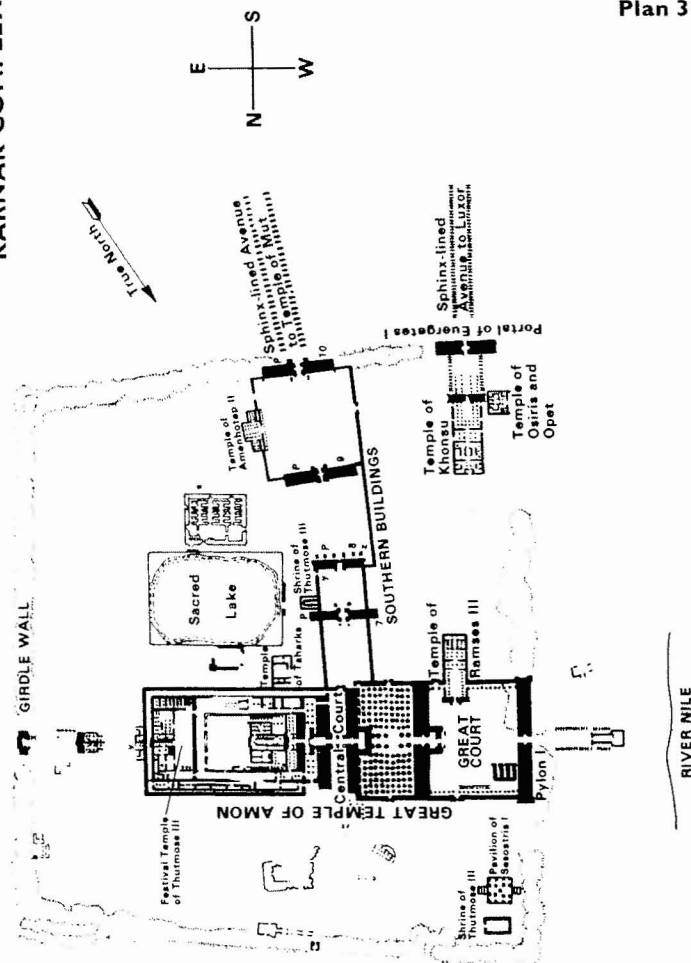
Reconstructed head of Ramses II (in front of Luxor Temple).



portrayals of Amenhotep III, particularly when shown in consort with the deities, are very little different from those of Ramses II some eight generations later. The same uniformity is found in the Karnak temple, which spans two thousand years.

KARNAK COMPLEX

Plan 3



CHAPTER 3 THE GREAT TEMPLE OF AMON AT KARNAK

BACKGROUND

The temple of Amon at Karnak, together with its outlying buildings, is a natural museum of ancient Egyptian art, a blueprint of the power and glory of a golden era and a mine of historical information. Beneath its giant architraves and between bulky column and wall relief lie the records of its growth from a modest 12th Dynasty shrine to a local deity, to a temple of splendid and unimaginable proportions dedicated to the King of Gods, Amon-Ra. It owes a colonnade to one Pharaoh, a pylon to another; an inspiration here, a whim there. But each has the sole purpose of pleasing the god that would ensure them a life long, powerful and glorious.

Unravelling the secrets of two thousand years has been a major feat of Egyptology, made the more difficult by the fact that architectural magnificence did not necessarily run parallel with military or civic excellence. Family rivalries and kingly jealousies were as often the incentive behind a construction as creative inspiration. One cannot help being amused for example at the oft-repeated tendency of the reigning Pharaoh to alter the royal cartouche of a predecessor and so take the credit for all the work he accomplished. To add to the confusion, some parts of the buildings were raised from dismantled shrines or the walls of other temples. In addition, Karnak had twice to endure the degradation of Amon, at the hands of Ikhnaton and of the early Christians.

An idea of the complexity of the task may be gauged when we learn that in the core of Amenhotep III's monumental third pylon were buried at least three structures of earlier periods; that a valuable historical inscription on how Kamose conquered the Hyksos—a period about which very little is known—was found text-downwards beneath a statue of Panejem which had been buried in the foundation of the second pylon of Ramses II; that both Ramses I and Seti I used blocks from Ikhnaton's sun temple for their large-scale additions to the temple; and that Harmhab crammed his ninth pylon with thousands of inscribed sandstone blocks from this same 'heretical' era.

Thutmose I, who ascended the throne at the beginning of the 18th Dynasty, actually made the first major alterations to the original shrine. He had two colonnades and two pylons built (Plan 6 *P.4* and *P.5*). Between the latter, Hatschepsut, his daughter and builder of the magnificent mortuary temple of Der el Bahri (page 75), erected a pair of huge obelisks. She also made some alterations to the side of the sanctuary. These were continued by her co-regent and successor Thutmose III. Though Thutmose III showed less interest in perpetuating his memory in impressive monuments than in creating an Egyptian world empire, he did build a festival temple (page 54) to the rear of the sanctuary, surrounding it with a girdle-wall, on the inner side of which were a number of small chambers.

It was Amenhotep III, builder of the temple of Luxor, who altered the front of Karnak temple. He raised a new pylon (Plan 5 *P.3*) in front of that of Thutmose I, but, impressive though it must have been, it was to be eclipsed by the additions of the 19th Dynasty. Ramses I erected the second pylon during his one year in power. Then his son, Seti I, started the construction of a huge hypostyle hall between the pylons of Ramses I and Amenhotep III. This work was continued by his successor Ramses II. Always going one better than his ancestors, Ramses II also built a second girdle-wall outside that of Thutmose III and with it the Great Temple of Amon had almost received its final, magnificent form. It was now officially and justifiably styled 'The Throne of the World'.

Seti II and Ramses III had two small separate temples built in front of the great complex. In the 22nd Dynasty under the Libyan kings of the Bubastides these were incorporated into a huge colonnaded court in front of the pylon of Ramses I. In the 25th Dynasty Taharka the Nubian also erected some gigantic columns in this court. The last addition to the temple, its entrance pylon (Plan 4 *P.1*), was erected in the Nubian Dynasty.

DESCRIPTION

First Pylon, Great Court, Shrine of Seti II

Seti II's two small obelisks rise on a terrace facing the Nile. From this point we approach the temple of Amon between a double row of ram-headed sphinxes. These have sun-discs on the head and a statue of the Pharaoh between the forepaws, showing the Sun God as strong as a lion, as docile as a ram, and protective of the Pharaoh Ramses II who placed them there. We must bear in mind that in

approaching the temple from the front we actually reverse, apart from a few exceptions, the order of building.

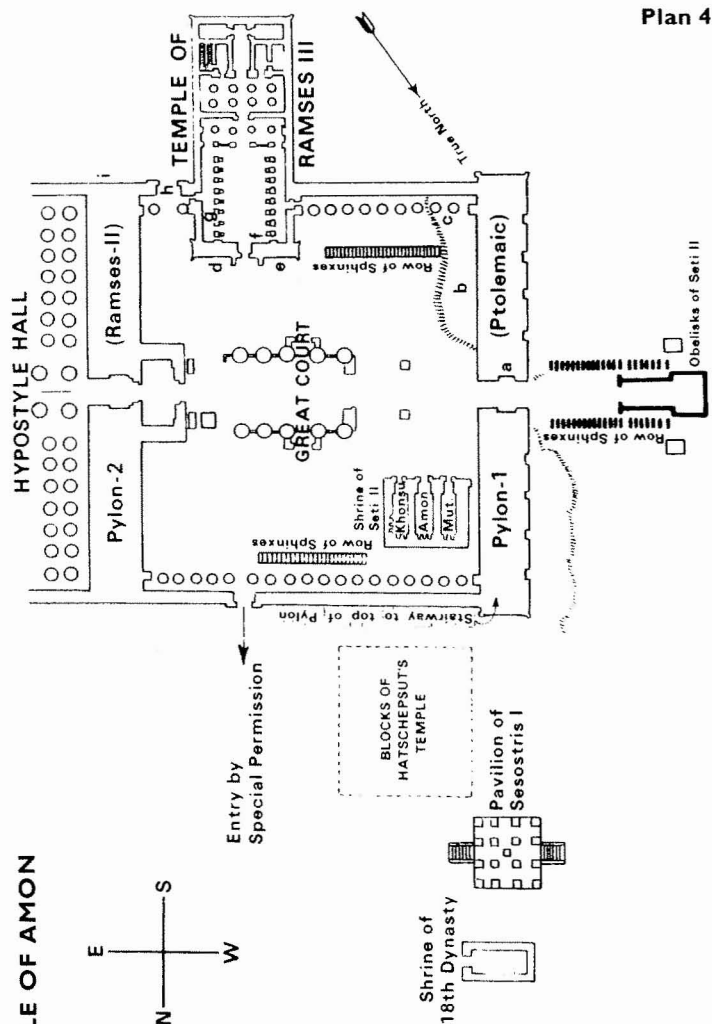
Before us rises the massive *first pylon* (Plan 4 *P.1*) which dates from the Nubian Dynasty and which was never completed. It is 113 metres wide, 43 metres high and 5 metres thick. On the doorway leading to the Great Court is an inscription (*a*) recording the latitude and longitude of the chief temples of the Pharaohs as calculated by the group of scholars accompanying the army of Napoleon to Egypt.

The *Great Court*, which was built during the 22nd Dynasty, covers the massive area of 8,919 square metres. On the right it incorporates a small temple built by Ramses III (page 41) and on the left a small shrine built by Seti II, comprising three chambers dedicated to Amon (in the centre) and to Mut and Khonsu respectively on either side. Towards the centre of the court is the base of what was once a pair of pedestals for statues and behind this is a double colonnade. The five columns to the left are being reconstructed and the single intact column to the right is inscribed by Psemmetikh II of the 26th Dynasty, who placed his name over that of the Nubian Taharka of the 25th Dynasty. It also records the name of Ptolemy IV.

On each side of the court is a row of sphinxes. These flanked the doorway when the pylon at the rear of the court (*P.2*) formed the entrance to the temple in the reign of Ramses II. They were removed and placed near the side walls when the entrance was extended towards the Nile.

Against the inner wall of the first pylon, at (*b*), are remnants of the crude brick ramps by which the stones were heaved into position. The last two columns on this same side of the court (*c*) provide another interesting clue as to how the ancient Egyptians conducted their work. Because they were never completed they show that the roughly-shaped stones, also heaved into position on ramps, were shaped after erection and that the polishing and decoration were performed from the top downwards as the brick ramps were removed layer by layer.

The grey sandstone *Shrine of Seti II* to the left of the court was dedicated to the Karnak triad: Amon, Mut and Khonsu. The centre section, to Amon, is the best preserved. On the walls are two different representations of the deity. Near the end of the right-hand wall Amon is seated in human form with his characteristic headgear and with Mut and Khonsu seated behind him. On the left-hand wall he is depicted as a ram with the sun-disc on his



Plan 4

head and travelling the heavens in his sacred barge. The *Holy Triad* was a common feature of the gods of ancient Egypt. At Thebes, Amon had Mut and Khonsu. At Abydos, Osiris had his sister-wife Isis and their son Horus. At Memphis, Ptah had his wife Sekhmet and their son Nefertem.

Temple of Ramses III

Across the court stands the Temple of Ramses III. This is the only temple still standing in the whole of Egypt which was built on a homogeneous plan by a single monarch.

The pylon which forms the entrance has now been repaired and shows, on the left-hand tower (*d*), a relief of the Pharaoh wearing the double crown and holding a group of prisoners by the hair, whilst in his other hand he raises a club to smite them. Amon stands before him handing him the sword of victory and delivering to him three rows of vanquished cities each represented as a human figure rising out of a symbolic fort which bears the name of the city. On the right-hand tower (*e*) the theme is repeated but with the Pharaoh wearing the crown of Lower Egypt. Large statues of the Pharaoh flank the doorway over which Ramses III receives the symbol of life from Amon.

Passing through the entrance pylon we come to an open court surrounded by covered passages on three sides, each supported by eight square pillars with statues of Osiris in front of them. On the terrace at the rear are four similar pillars and four columns which have bud capitals. The reliefs on the back wall of the pylon (*f*) show Ramses receiving the hieroglyph for 'jubilee' from the enthroned Amon. On the east wall (*g*) is a procession of standard-bearers and the Pharaoh leading the priests who bear the sacred barges of Amon, Mut and Khonsu.

The hypostyle hall of the temple of Ramses III has eight columns with papyrus-bud capitals, adjoining which are three shrines respectively dedicated to Mut, Amon and Khonsu.

This temple is a cameo. Its charm is its size, its value is its adherence to the traditional, its historical importance is its completion according to the unadulterated blueprint of Ramses III.

Ramses III ruled at the tail end of a long line of imperial Pharaohs and he was the last of the Ramessides to carve a place for himself in history. Though wealthy—having reaped the fruits of his ancestors' battles—he was far from great, a fact that he seems himself to have recognised by placing his modest temple across the axis of the main structure at Karnak as though to say, 'I do not wish

to compete'. During his 32-year reign he fought three important battles, and his architectural activities included a temple at Medinet Habu (page 92) where he recorded his battles, and the initial construction of the temple of Khonsu (page 63), which was completed by his successors. He also enriched the temples of Memphis and Heliopolis but ended his days severely criticised by his contemporaries, who despised his weakened position under the priests of Amon.

Triumphal Monument of Sheshonk I

Retracing our steps to the Great Court via the exit to the east of Ramses III's court, we find ourselves in the portico of the Bubastides (*h*) which is embellished with reliefs and inscriptions of the Pharaohs of the 22nd Dynasty. The rear door of this portico leads to the Triumphal Monument of Sheshonk I, which is situated on the outside of the southern tower of the second pylon (*i*). This scene commemorates the victory of Shishak of the Bible over Rehoboam, son of Solomon the King of Judah, when Solomon's temple was robbed of its riches. Beneath Amon is the goddess Mut holding a club, bow and quiver, leading five rows of captives carved in perfect symmetry. To the right Sheshonk is grasping a group of captives by the hair and striking them with his raised club. The Biblical passages covering this campaign are:

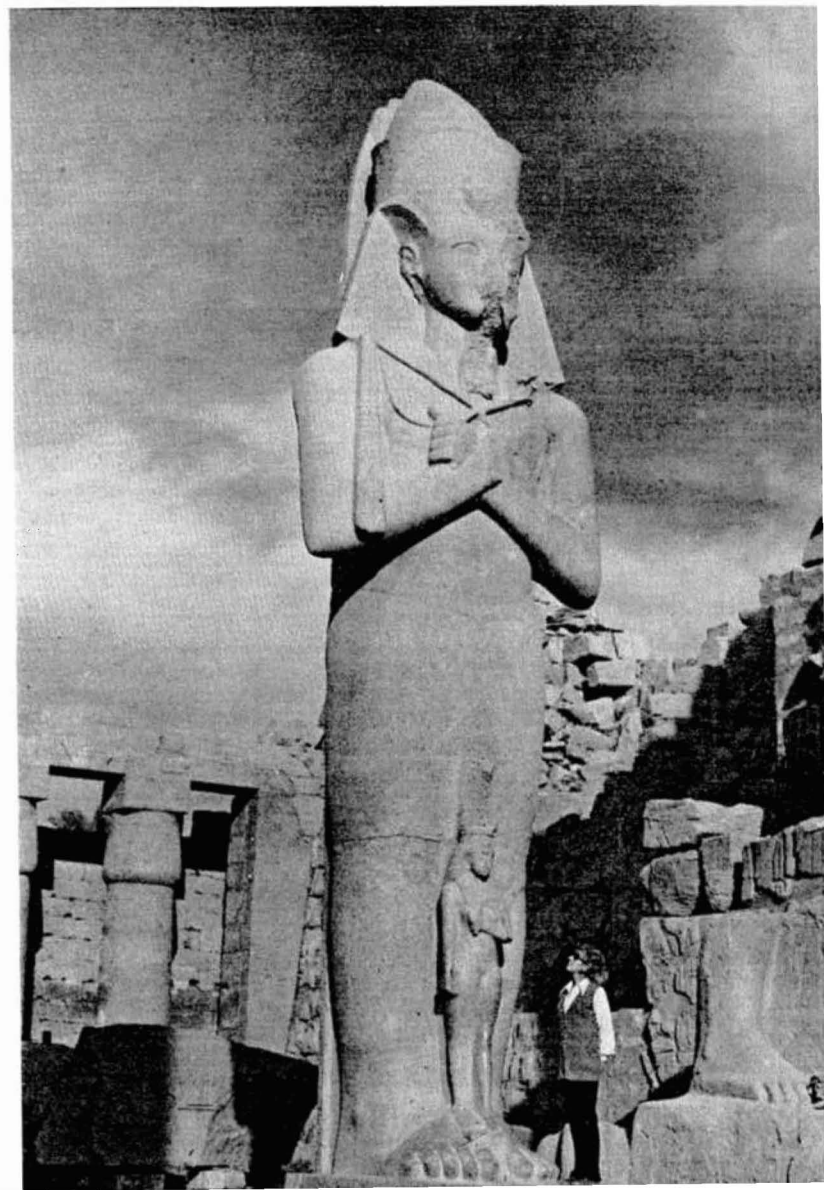
'And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem: and he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made.' (1 Kings 14:25-6)

'... And it came to pass, that in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the Lord, with twelve hundred chariots, and threescore thousand horsemen: and the people were without number that came with him out of Egypt ...' (2nd Chro. 12:2-3)

Second Pylon, Great Hypostyle Hall

We return to the great court of the temple and proceed towards the second pylon, the pylon of Ramses II (*P.2*). The centre section was originally restored by the Ptolemies. It is now being reconstructed after the removal of the blocks from Ikhnaton's Sun Temple to Aton which were used as filling for the core. Just before the pylon is a small vestibule flanked by two large statues. The one on the left, in red granite, is of Panejem, son-in-law of the high priest.

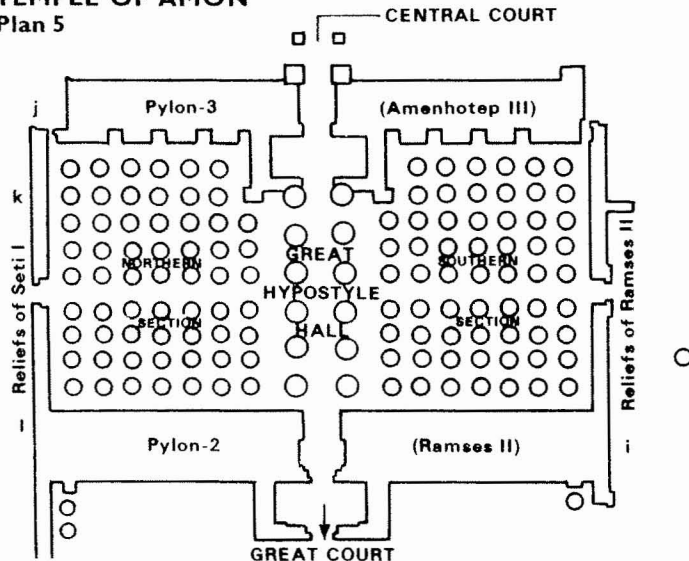
The statue of Panejem found buried in the Second Pylon of Ramses II.



This is the statue already mentioned (page 37) as having been found under the second pylon.

The *Great Hypostyle Hall*, fruit of Egypt's power and wealth and one of the most massive of human creations, covers an area of 4,983 square metres. To support the roof 134 columns were arranged in sixteen rows. The double row of central columns leading from the doorway of the second pylon eastwards towards the sanctuary is higher than the others. The smooth-shafted central columns are twenty-one metres high and are topped with calyx capitals large enough to hold one hundred standing men. The somewhat squat side columns have bud capitals and the discrepancy in height is made up by square pillars between the steps of the roof. The space between these pillars once held windows and served to light the entire hall, revealing that the walls, the shafts of the columns, the architrave and in fact every available space was covered with inscriptions and reliefs. It has been stated in almost every description of this hall to date, but must nevertheless be repeated here, that the whole of the cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris could be comfortably accommodated within its walls.

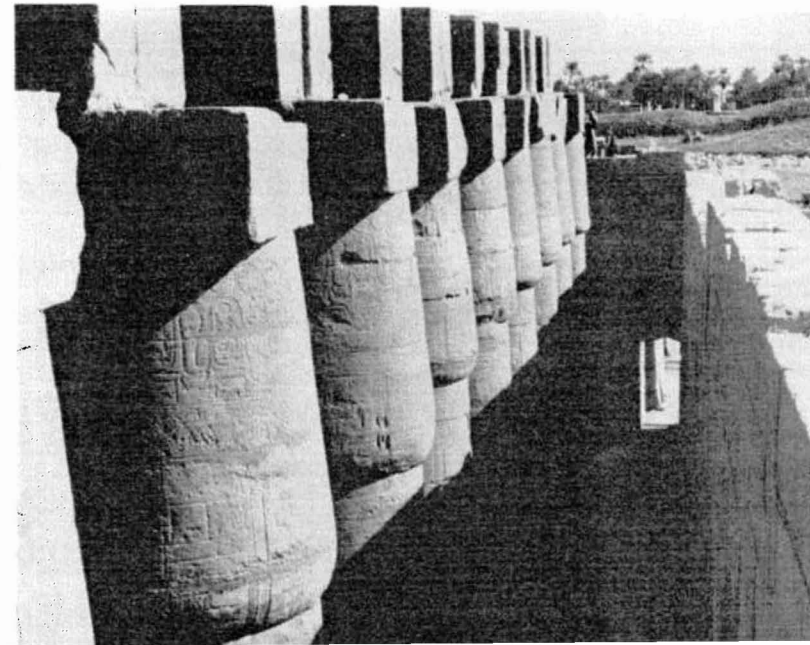
TEMPLE OF AMON Plan 5



The hypostyle hall was planned and begun by Ramses I and was continued by his son Seti I on a scale far surpassing Amenhotep III's unfinished hypostyle hall at Luxor. It was finally completed by Seti's son Ramses II. Although Seti I was responsible for the construction of the entire northern half of the hall and also the central aisle, and although Ramses II built only the southern portion, it is the latter who has secured credit for the greater part of the work.

The overall effect is awe-inspiring. Although some critics have commented on the less-than-elegant columns at the sides or on the fact that 'you can't see the trees for forest', its magnificence is indisputable. When Napoleon's learned entourage first saw it, the hall looked as though devastated by a hurricane. Leaning columns seemed on the verge of collapse, many were already prostrate and the flag-stones were littered with debris. French Egyptologists working for the Department of Antiquities devoted their energies to reconstruction. The work of Charles Legrain, followed by Maurice Pillet and finally M. H. Chevrier, who completed a 25-year mission as Director of Works at Karnak in 1956, left the Great Hypostyle Hall erect and proud.

The 'forest' of side columns of the Hypostyle Hall, Karnak Temple.



Only one single column (the first in the sixth row) bears the name of Ramses I, who started its construction in his brief two year reign. It may be noticed that the reliefs of Seti I (in the northern portion) are in flat relief and are somewhat more delicate than the deeper, more definite inscriptions of Ramses II (in the southern portion from the eleventh row). Most of the reliefs depict adoration of the Theban god. Ramses III, Ramses IV, Ramses VI and Ramses XII all recorded their names.

On the outside of the hypostyle hall are some important historical reliefs. These are accessible from the exit at the side or from the central court. They are portrayals of Seti I's and Ramses II's military campaigns in Asia, the like of which had not been seen for two generations since the expansion of the empire under Thutmose III. There are over sixty metres of representations from the spectacular charges into the foe with arrows and chariots to the ultimate presentation of prisoners of war to Amon, Mut and Khonsu.

Ramses II's campaign was against the Hittites. It is depicted on the southern wall and contains the actual text of the treaty, the earliest surviving international non-aggression pact. According to the treaty each state, having equal, independent status, renounced all ideas of aggression against the other. It declared that peace should henceforth prevail between the two kings and all their dependents and reaffirmed earlier treaties existing between the two countries. A mutual defence alliance, co-operation in the humane treatment of disloyal subjects and also in the extradition of political refugees and immigrants, formed clauses of the pact.

It bore the title:

*'The treaty which the great chief of Kheta, Khetasar, the valiant, the son of Merasar, the great chief of Kheta, the valiant, the grandson of Seplal, the great chief of Kheta, the valiant, made, upon a silver tablet for Usermare-Setepnere (Ramses II), the great ruler of Egypt, the valiant, the son of Seti I, the great ruler of Egypt, the valiant; the grandson of Ramses I, the great ruler of Egypt, the valiant; the good treaty of peace and of brotherhood, setting peace between them forever.'*¹

Witnesses to the treaty were a thousand gods and goddesses of the land of the Hittites and a thousand gods and goddesses from the land of Egypt.

The battle scenes are similar to those on the first pylon of the temple of Luxor already described (pages 26/27).

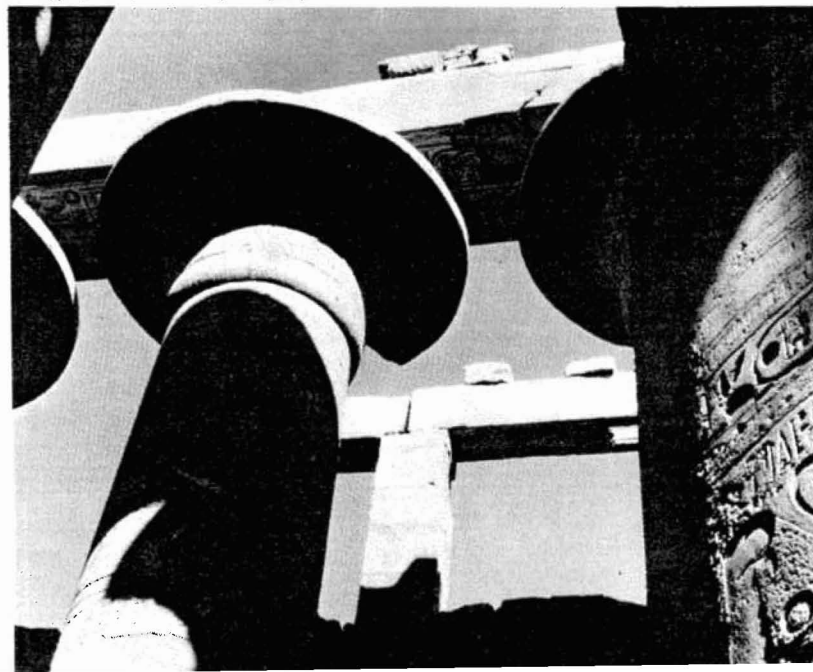
Seti I's battles took place in Lebanon, southern Palestine, and Syria, and are depicted on the northern wall. The series begins on

the eastern wall (Plan 5f) where (in the upper row) Seti alights from his chariot in the wooded Lebanon. The Lebanese are obliged to cut down trees for the Pharaoh. In the lower row Seti is in battle with the bedouins of southern Palestine (to the right). He drives his chariot, drawn by two horses, whilst firing arrows at the enemy. Confused heaps of dead and wounded lie on the ground. The fortress of Canaan, above the battlefield, is used as a hideout and the inhabitants assist fugitives to escape into it.

On the left hand section of the main wall (k) is the battle in Syria. In the upper row the Pharaoh advances to the front line of the attack, shooting arrows that send the enemy, both charioteers and cavalry, fleeing in confusion. In the fortress which is surrounded by a moat the inhabitants are surprisingly carved full face as they peer from behind trees. Seti is also depicted binding captives, leading or dragging them. Two rows of captured Syrians are presented to Amon, Mut and Khonsu along with valuable booty.

In the lower row is a triumphal march through Palestine (left), a battle with the bedouins of southern Palestine and (right) the victorious march from Syria. The border between Asia and Africa

The Hypostyle Hall, Karnak Temple. Calyx capitals of the central columns.



¹James Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, Hodder and Stoughton, 1950, pp. 437/438. In Hittite, Khetasar is Khattishili III, Merasar is Murshili II, Seplal is Shuppiluliumas.

is marked by a crocodile-infested canal bordered by reeds and linked by a bridge. At each end of this bridge is a fortified guard-house and, on the home front, Seti is welcomed by groups of priests carrying garlanded flowers. Captives and booty are presented to Amon.

On the right-hand wall (*I*) is the battle of Kadesh (in the top row), the battle against the Libyans (in the middle row), and the battle against the Hittites in northern Syria (in the lower row). The defenders of Kadesh are pierced by arrows. The Libyans, distinguished by a single plaited braid and feathers, are smitten with the sword. The Hittites, shot at by the charioted Pharaoh, take flight on foot, on horseback and in chariot. In the lower row, when Seti hands his captives and the captured vessels over to Amon, Mut and Khonsu, the goddess of truth is present.

On each side of the doorway separating these two walls (*k* and *l*) are colossal representations of Amon holding several rows of captured nations and cities by cords and presenting the sword of victory to Seti I. Seti raises his club against a band of foes whom he dangles by the hair.

Third Pylon, Pavilion of Sesostri I, Central Court

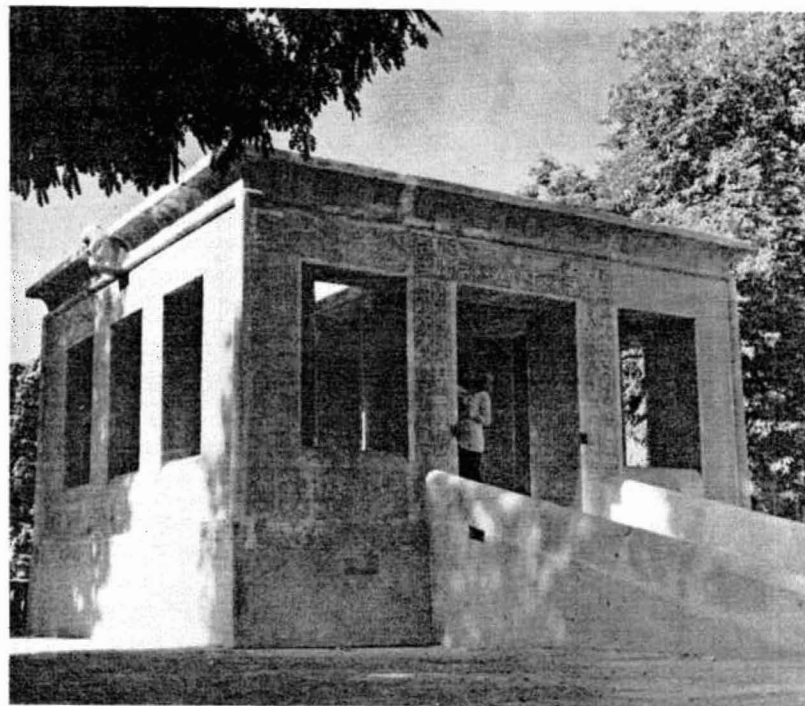
At the rear of the hypostyle hall is the reconstructed *third pylon* (*P.3*) built by Amenhotep III. It certainly needs more than a little imagination to reconstruct in the mind's eye the gold and silver inlay, the flagstaffs and splendour of this one-time entrance to the temple. When Amenhotep III was constructing it he was simultaneously finalising plans for the colonnaded hall at the Luxor temple. Together they formed his most impressive architectural achievements.

Some years ago when soil drainage was being checked to avoid the crumbling of columns from undermining, the pylon was found to contain in its core the ruins of temples and shrines of earlier periods. The task of extracting the inscribed or painted blocks deep in the pylon's foundation, whilst propping up existing walls prior to reconstruction, was, and still is, an exacting one. And the matching of the extracted pieces with their partners in pattern and history has been extremely time-consuming. But with the successful removal and complete reconstruction of some of the lost masterpieces, these labours have received their supreme reward.

The *Pavilion of Sesostri I*, a 12th Dynasty structure erected for the Jubilee of the Pharaoh, is the earliest structure at Karnak today. Its blocks were rescued from obscurity and reassembled just north

of the main temple to Amon within the girdle-wall, where it can be seen by special permission. The walls of the pavilion are made of fine limestone, and the reliefs, minutely and precisely carved in high relief, are amongst the finest to be found in Luxor. They show the restraint and austerity typical of the Middle Kingdom when the work was unencumbered by too much detail. The simple shrine consists of twenty-four columns and the pedestal on which the Amon barge was placed to let the priestly bearers rest. It has been decided that the original site was on one side of the paved thoroughfare leading from Karnak temple to Luxor temple.

The earliest structure at Karnak: 12th Dynasty Pavilion of Sesostri I.



A shrine which can be traced to the reigns of Amenhotep I, Thutmose II and Thutmose IV was also found in the third pylon and has been reconstructed immediately to the north of the Pavilion of Sesostri. It is made of alabaster. Since this was a medium used mainly for statues and offering-tables it is not often that we find a shrine or temple in alabaster. It is small, simple, of beautiful proportions and in nearly perfect condition. On the right-hand of the inner wall is a particularly lovely representation of the Pharaoh kneeling before a table of offerings.

Also extracted from Amenhotep's third pylon are finely inscribed granite blocks that must once have been a dramatic structure in red and black, built by Queen Hatshepsut. Her figure, carved in low relief, has not been defaced.

One cannot help wondering why temples and shrines were dismantled and used for new constructions. Ikhnaton's temple to Aton is easily explained because with his passing the worship of Amon was reinstated and reference to sun-worship was obliterated. But why should the exquisite temple of Sesostri have been hidden in a pylon? And the temple of Hatshepsut? Because she was a woman and not recognised as a Pharaoh of Egypt, despite her beard, male dress and attempts to prove her divine origin? Then why should the small and exquisite alabaster shrine have been destined for the same fate? The illustrious Amenhotep the Magnificent could hardly have been short of raw material.

Only one thing is certain: but for the continuous efforts of Egyptologists, particularly in the last fifty years, many if not all of these hidden wonders would have been lost forever.

In the *Central Court* of the temple is the last survivor of four obelisks erected in pairs by Thutmose I under the faithful guidance of his chief architect, Ineni, who brought them from the granite quarries of Aswan. There are three vertical inscriptions on each face of this obelisk: the central one dedicated by Thutmose I himself, the other two additions by Ramses IV and VI.

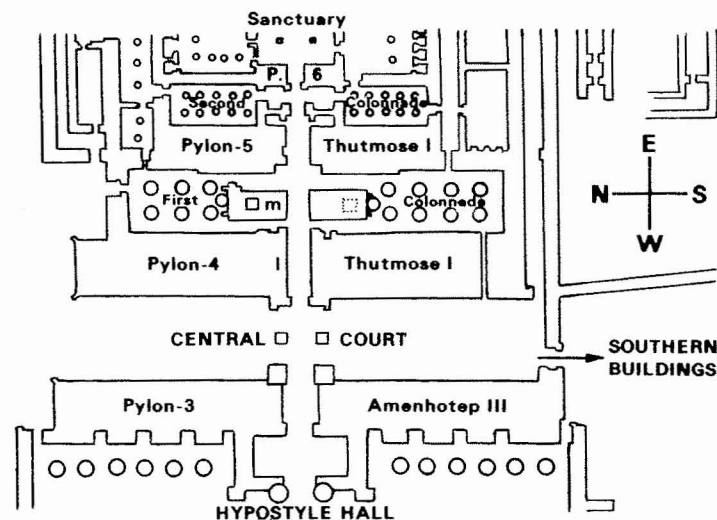
Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Pylons

We now proceed to a much ruined part of the temple. The *fourth pylon* (P.4), built by Thutmose I, is followed by a *colonnade* with a strange and interesting history. Within this enclosed area are clues to family feuds, petty jealousies and religious differences, to say nothing of Pharonic vanity. The colonnade was originally designed

by Thutmose I and it was planned to have a roof of cedar. In it stands an obelisk (Plan 6 m), the tallest known, and one of two erected by Queen Hatshepsut, who removed part of the roof of her father's colonnade to place them there. Hatshepsut's co-regent and successor, Thutmose III, at a later date in the family feud had a wall built to hide the obelisks of his predecessor, this being a simpler expedient than their removal and destruction. He also obliterated Hatshepsut's name and inserted his own as making sacrifices to Amon. The figure of Amon himself was obliterated by Ikhnaton and restored by Seti I, thus putting an end to the vicissitudes suffered for two hundred years by the colonnade of Thutmose I.

The beautiful remaining obelisk of Hatshepsut was erected in the 16th year of her reign. It was made of a single block of pink Aswan granite of the finest quality. The apex was once covered with a mixture of gold and silver. This lofty spire records the fact that it was made in seven months. It weighs something like

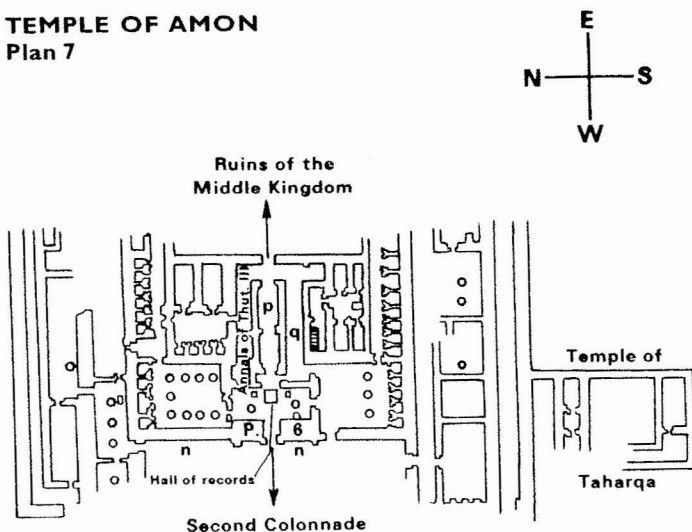
TEMPLE OF AMON Plan 6



317,515 kilogrammes (700,000 lbs). One cannot but marvel at the tenacity required merely to quarry it, let alone to cart it to the Nile, transport it along its waters, disembark it and finally erect it with perfect accuracy on a pedestal.

Forming the rear wall of the colonnade is the *fifth pylon* (P.5), also erected by Thutmose I. Passing through it we enter Thutmose I's second colonnade, which originally comprised twenty sixteen-sided columns. It is now very much in ruin. On each side of the central passage Thutmose III constructed a pair of chambers and beyond this rises the last and smallest pylon, the *sixth pylon* (Plan 7 P.6) erected by Thutmose III. On each face of the pylon (n) are lists of tribes of the south which were subjugated by Thutmose III's army, and also those of Syria, which alone number 119. The conquered territories are shown as an elliptical hieroglyph character surmounted by a human bust with arms bound behind the back. The Syrians are depicted with pointed beards and heavy robes. In long processions they bear their tributes to be recorded by the vizier.

TEMPLE OF AMON Plan 7



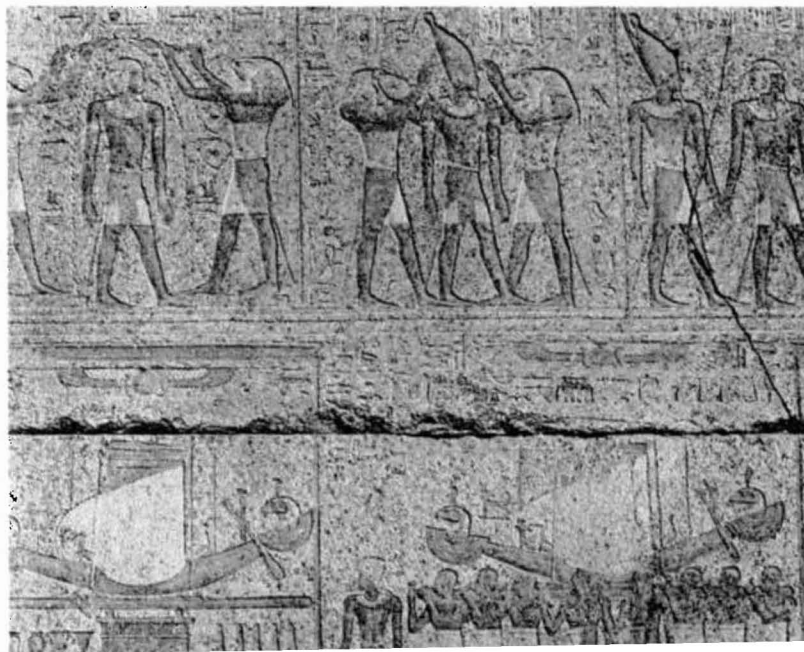
Hall of Records, Sanctuary

The granite gateway of the sixth pylon was restored by Seti I and as we pass through it we enter what has become known as the *Hall of Records* of Thutmose III. These were the state records made by the priests of the temple to detail the sources of gifts and booty received by them. Of course, following Thutmose's military victories Karnak was now increasingly filled with gold and silver treasures from far afield, as well as with magnificent bronze weapons of war and furniture of ivory and ebony.

The most characteristic feature of this Hall of Records are the two stately granite pillars (o), one bearing the lotus of Upper Egypt and the other the papyrus of Lower Egypt in high relief. These rather unusual twin symbols emphasise that the unity of the two lands, formed and broken many times in their long history, was intact in the 18th Dynasty.

Beyond is the *Sanctuary* (p) which comprises two chambers. It is of pink granite and was constructed by the brother of Alexander the Great, Philip Arrhidaeus, on the site of an earlier chamber. The walls are finely carved and coloured; the reliefs on the upper

Crowning ceremony of Philip Arrhidaeus (upper row). Priests bearing sacred barges of Amon (lower row); Sanctuary, Karnak Temple.



reaches of the wall still retain their colour. On the outer wall of the sanctuary on the right-hand side (*q*) is a superb relief in excellent condition of Philip being crowned and presented to the gods (above) and of the festal barges of Amon being carried in priestly procession (below). On the left-hand outer wall of the sanctuary are the *Annals of Thutmose III*, depicting details of the cities and tribes subdued in his military campaigns.

Leaving the sanctuary we come to a large open space where there are very scanty remains of Middle Kingdom structures. Beyond rises the Great Festival Temple of Thutmose III.

Great Festival Temple of Thutmose III: Plan 8

Before describing this 'Most Glorious of Monuments' as it was called, let us first recall that Thutmose III was the creator of a vast Egyptian empire; in a series of annals he gave full details of his seventeen campaigns and records of the spoils of battle. He was the first Egyptian Pharaoh to introduce military tactics, his most successful battle technique being the *blitzkrieg*: some 3,000 chariots, hidden behind a hill, simultaneously dashing into action with lances flying, hooves whipping up the dust, soldiers yelling. The resulting confusion in the enemy ranks was designed to weaken their morale. It inevitably did.

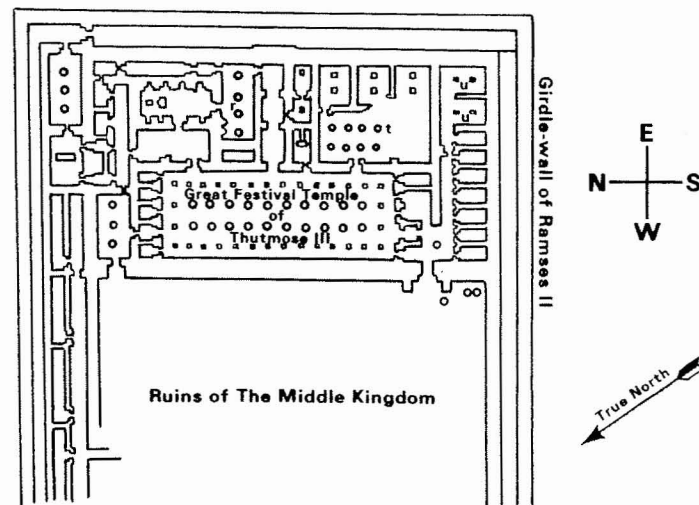
Thutmose III was no war-monger. He never appointed Egyptian governors over the conquered territories. Instead he gave power to the local chieftains and, moreover, started cultural relations by bringing the sons of the chieftains to Egypt to study and absorb Egyptian culture, ideology and religion before returning to their homelands.

Following the victories of Thutmose III Egypt was justifiably imbued with a feeling of national pride, while the victor himself humbly gave thanks to Amon to the rear of the national temple at Karnak.

The *Festival Temple of Thutmose III* is spacious and elegant, 44 metres wide and 16 deep. The roof is supported by 20 columns in two rows and 32 square pillars on the sides. One immediately notices a lack of conformity; Thutmose ordered his workers to taper the columns downwards and not upwards and to top them with peculiar inverted calyx capitals. The capital gives a sort of tent-like effect and may have been designed to assuage the Pharaoh's thirst for outdoor living. It was never repeated. The effect is definitely clumsy. The reliefs on the pillars, which are shorter than the columns, show Thutmose III in the presence of the gods.

Grouped around the sanctuary, which comprises three chambers, were some fifty small halls and chambers. Most lie in ruin today. To the left of the sanctuary is a chamber with four clustered papyrus columns (*r*). The lower parts of the walls are decorated

TEMPLE OF AMON Plan 8



with exotic plants and animals brought to Egypt from Syria in the 25th year of the Pharaoh's reign. It says a great deal for the character of Thutmose III that, despite his prowess as a warrior, his ability to topple the powerful Queen Hatschepsut from the throne and his vow to revenge his people for their conquest by the Hyksos, he should have found time and interest to import flowers and animals into his native land.

To the right of the sanctuary is what is now known as the *Alexander Room (s)*. It was originally built by Thutmose III and was restored by Alexander the Great. The reliefs show Alexander, and in some instances Thutmose III, sacrificing to the gods.

To the south of the Alexander Room is a hall with eight sixteen-sided columns (*t*). The two small chambers with columns (*u*), followed by seven other chambers, carry reliefs of Thutmose III.

Rear Section of Temple of Amon, Sacred Lake

Plan 3 will show that the entire portion eastwards from the fifth pylon, or in other words the rear section of the temple of Karnak, was surrounded by a girdle-wall. What remains of this is embellished with reliefs of Ramses II sacrificing to the various deities. His colonnade at the far end just outside this girdle-wall is now a jumble of ruins and beyond this is a small temple also built by him, and an ancient gateway which dates from the time of the Ptolemies.

To the south of this section of Karnak is the *Sacred Lake*, the symbol of Nun the eternal ocean, where the priests of Amon purified themselves in the holy water. Unfortunately too few of the hewn rocks survived the years to allow of genuine restoration. The gigantic stone beetle or *scarab* that overlooks the lake was one of four placed there by Amenhotep III in honour of the Sun God.

Southern Buildings, Karnak Cachette, Seventh to Tenth Pylons

The buildings extending southwards from the central court of the main temple of Karnak are mostly in ruin today. A brief survey will be made, however, to show the importance of the plan of reconstruction over the next ten years. A group of French architects are under contract with the Department of Antiquities for the complete reconstruction of the Karnak area, of which this is only one section, but perhaps the most important.

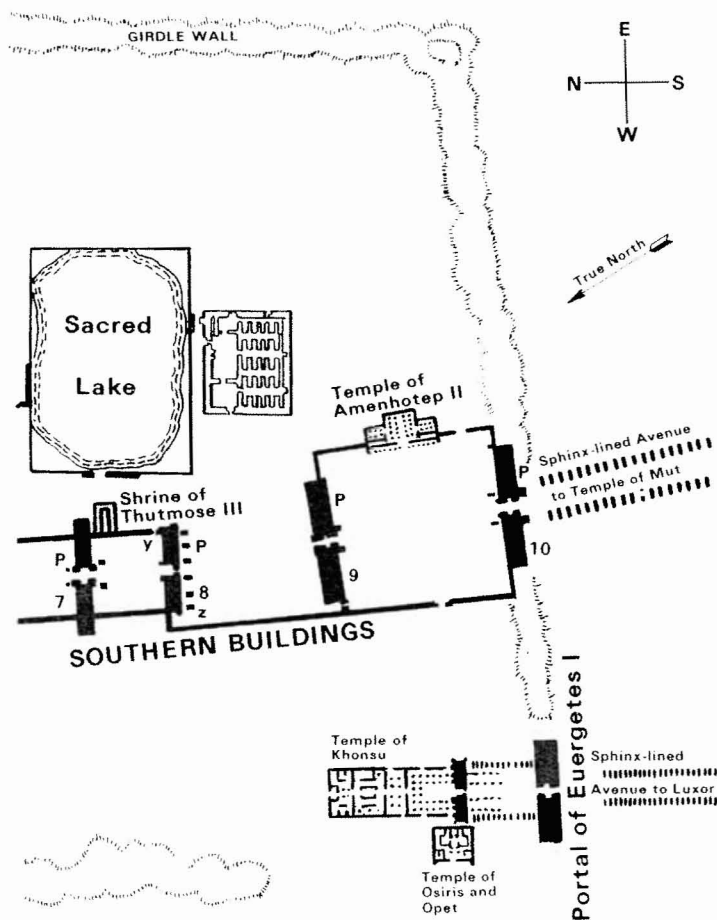
Proceeding from the central court (lying between the third and fourth pylons) are the remains of a court where there is a good view of Ramses II's famous treaty with the Hittites, mentioned on

Granite pillars bearing the symbols of Upper and Lower Egypt, Hall of Records, Karnak Temple.



KARNAK TEMPLE — Southern Buildings

Plan 3

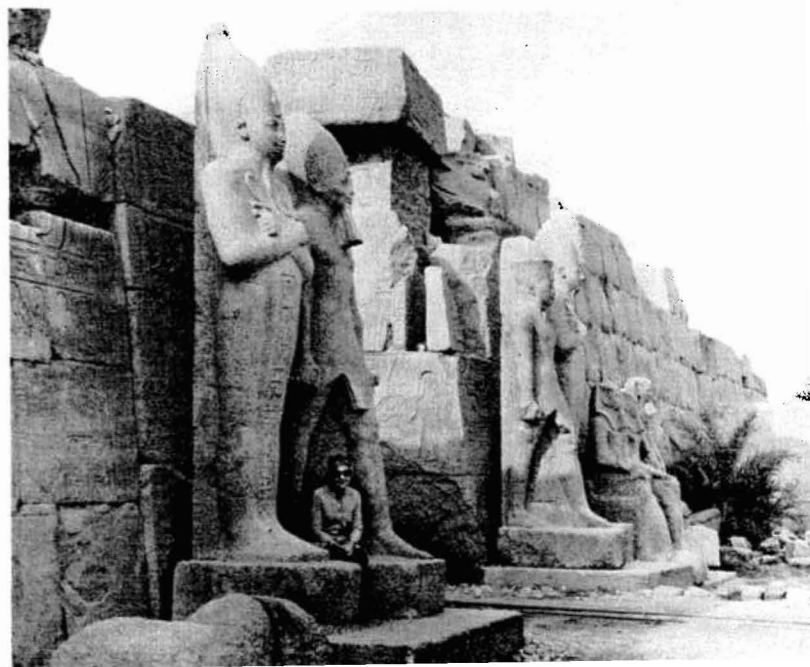


pages 46/47, followed by the seventh pylon (P.7). This court was the site of a temple of the Middle Kingdom and it was here that Legrain extracted a fantastic number of works of art from what became known as the *Karnak Cachette*. Buried in a pit were thousands of pieces including statues in stone and bronze, sphinxes and sacred animals. The bronze items alone numbered 17,000. It seems that one of the Pharaohs decided to have a spring clean in the temple and remove all the junk. Though most of the pieces are of little artistic merit, the find shows that the temple could well have housed the 86,486 statues mentioned in the Great Harris Papyrus.

The *seventh pylon* (P.7) was built by Thutmose III, and facing it to the south are the remains of two colossal statues of him in red granite. Between the walls uniting the seventh and eighth pylons, to the east, is a small shrine dating also from the reign of Thutmose III.

The *eighth pylon* (P.8) was the work of Queen Hatshepsut and is the most ancient part of the structure. In fact there is very little proof of her having built this pylon, for her name was removed from the reliefs by Thutmose II. And following Ikhnaton's removal of

Reconstructed statues by the Eighth Pylon, Karnak Temple.



all allusions to Amon, Seti I restored them, often inserting his own name in place of those of the older rulers. Reconstruction of this area may yet supply the missing clues to the overlapping reigns of the Thutmosides.

In the doorway at the rear left-hand of this court (Plan 3 v) is an important historical relief on the left. It is the first instance in Egypt's long history where the high priest, in this case Amenhotep, is depicted in the same size as the Pharaoh. Standing with arms uplifted, Amenhotep offers flowers to Ramses IX. This relief indicates the growth of priestly power. Faithful traditionalists of the established religion, the priests of Amon had hitherto been righteous, just and devout. The power of leadership had been firmly vested in the throne and they had recognised and accepted this. Over the years however their simple piety had turned to mild interest in earthly matters, then acute interest, and finally to intrigue and a craving for political power. The high priest depicted in this mural makes offerings to the Pharaoh while being draped in linen by two servants. A reciprocal gesture of appreciation? Or a royal bribe?

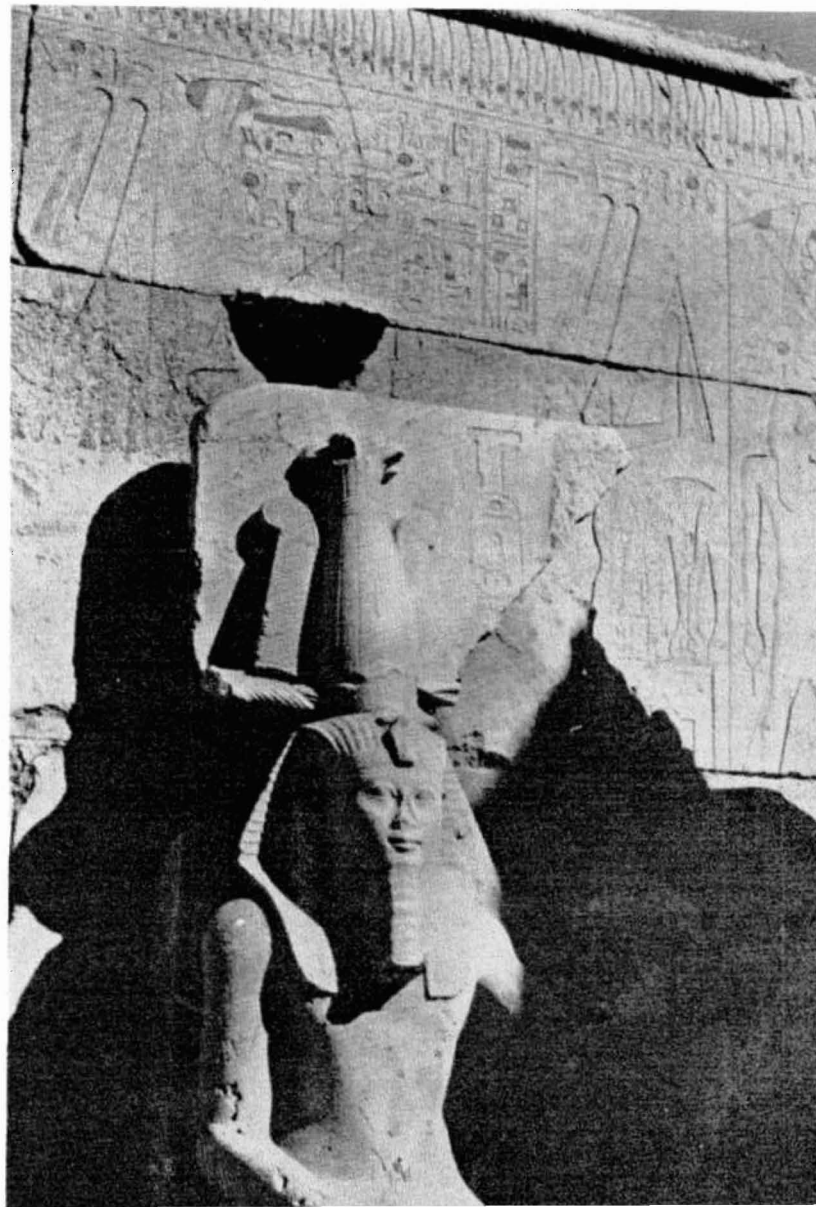
Beyond the eighth pylon is a row of six royal personages. The best preserved are Amenhotep I (in limestone) and Thutmose II (in red granite), both to the west.

The *ninth pylon* (P.9) was built by Harmhab the one-time general. When repairs started it was found to be filled, like its companion the *tenth pylon* (P.10), with blocks from Ikhnaton's temple to the Sun. Together with the 40,000-odd blocks from this same period found beneath the hypostyle hall and the second pylon, these number some 60,000 blocks and are valuable clues to a period about which there are many gaps in our knowledge. When the first small, distinctively uniform sandstone blocks were discovered in the pylon of Ramses II, it was at first erroneously assumed that they had been brought up-river from a dismantled temple in Tel el Amarna. Drainage operations subsequently led to the excavation of parts of no less than seventeen colossal statues of Ikhnaton himself. Ikhnaton in fact had had the temple erected before he changed his capital to Tel el Amarna and while Thebes was witnessing the slow indoctrination of a new religious concept.

Ikhnaton Temple Project

What is now known as the Ikhnaton Temple Project was originally undertaken by the University Museum of Pennsylvania. Now it is subsidised in part by the Antiquities Department and in part by the

Statue of Amenhotep II in Karnak Temple.

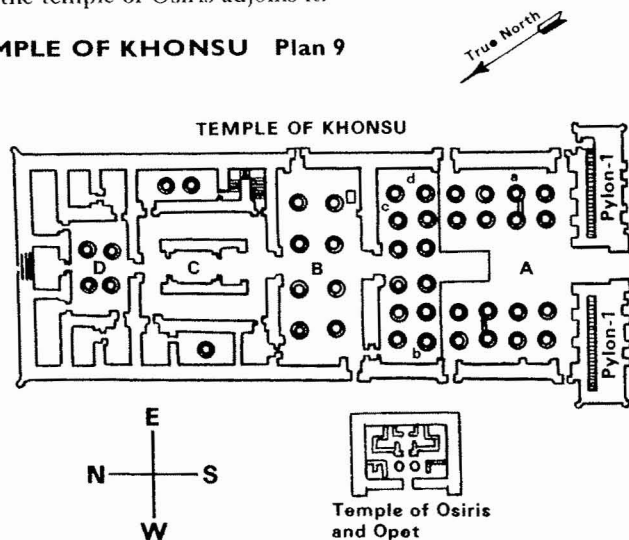


Smithsonian Institution, and is the first scientific study of antiquities by computer. It entails the extraction of the blocks and the feeding of details of their design, inscriptions, etc. into a computer, which will match the pieces and prepare the way for reconstruction. Modern techniques may thus concentrate a lifetime's work into a decade. The question is whether the blocks will prove to be parts of one immense temple, a worthy companion to the temple of Amon, or a complex of many.

It is no exaggeration to say that the Ikhnaton Temple Project is one of the most important pieces of work being done in Luxor today. To date there is a gap in the history of the area. Only in the tomb of Ramose (page 141) is there an opportunity to compare the age-old tradition of artistic expression with the new realism characteristic of Ikhnaton's time. What a drama when, within the very precincts of Amon's sacred temple where he enjoyed unquestioned dominance for generations, there will rise a structure from a period meant to have been forever forgotten. Side by side with Amon's power and supremacy will be Ikhnaton's new faith and symbol, the sun, with its radiating force ending in the gesture of giving.

The eastern avenue of sphinxes extends from the tenth pylon to the Gate of Philadelphus, which is excellently preserved. The temple of Mut is to the south. To the west is the temple of Khonsu and the temple of Osiris adjoins it.

TEMPLE OF KHONSU Plan 9



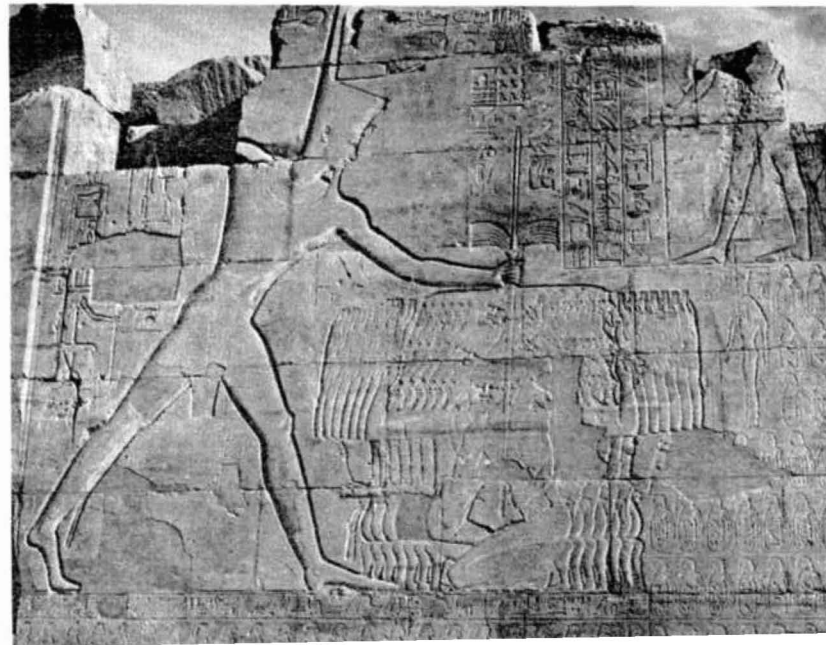
Temple of Khonsu: Plan 9

The Temple of Khonsu, dedicated to the Moon God Khonsu, son of Amon and Mut, is a classical example of a New Kingdom temple. Ramses III was responsible for building the original sanctuary and erecting the walls but it was only completed under his successors Ramses IV, who continued the near chambers and added a small hypostyle hall, Ramses XII, and Hrihor, the high priest who seized the throne at the close of the 20th Dynasty. Hrihor added a colonnaded court and the entrance pylon. In the 21st Dynasty the temple was continued under Panejem I.

The large pylon at the entrance (Plan 9 *P.1*) has representations of the high priest and his wife making sacrifices to various Theban deities. The high priest, Hrihor, stands in the position traditionally occupied by the Pharaohs of Egypt. The four vertical grooves with corresponding apertures in the masonry at the front of the pylon were used to fasten the flagstaffs.

Passing through the central portal of the pylon, decorated

Thutmose III in a traditional scene showing the punishment of all enemy countries.



with reliefs of Alexander II, we enter the Court (A). This has four side-exits and is surrounded on three sides by colonnades of papyrus columns with bud capitals formed in double rows. Those at the rear of the court are on a raised terrace.

There is a representation on the right-hand wall (a) showing the main pylon of the temple with eight, not four, flagstaves. On the walls of the terrace Hrihor makes offerings to Amon, Mut and Khonsu (b). At (c) he receives gifts from Khonsu and there are also representations of the sacred barge. At (d) Hrihor offers flowers to an image of Min, the god of human fertility.

Through the doorway at the back of the court is the hypostyle hall (B) which spans the full breadth of the temple. The four papyrus columns in the central aisle have calyx capitals whilst the smaller side ones have bud capitals. The wall reliefs were added by Ramses XII and depict him sacrificing to the gods in the presence of Hrihor, who later dethroned him.

The central doorway in the rear wall leads to the sanctuary (C). The reliefs represent the Pharaohs Ramses IV, Ramses XII and various deities.

Behind the sanctuary, on each side of which are small chambers with reliefs of Ramses IV, is a small door of the Ptolemaic period leading to a small hall (D) which has four twenty-sided columns. The reliefs mostly depict Ramses IV but there are also some representations of the Emperor Augustus on each side of the entrance. There are seven small chambers, decorated by Ramses III and his successors, surrounding this hall.

The temple of Khonsu is of special historical significance since it bears witness to the transmission of Pharonic power, between the reigns of Ramses III and Ramses XII, from the royal line of Pharaohs to the priests of Amon. As already mentioned the high priests gradually acquired more political power after the close of the 18th Dynasty. With an ever-weakening line of Pharaohs after Ramses II they were at last able to usurp the throne. In this temple the name of the high priest appears in a royal cartouche for the first time.

Temple of Osiris and Opet: Plan 9

The Temple of Osiris and Opet adjoins that of Khonsu to the south-west. It comprises a rectangular hall which has a well-preserved ceiling resting on two Hathor-decorated columns, a second small hall which is flanked by two rooms, and a sanctuary. The sanctuary has representations of King Euergetes II before

various deities.

A flight of steps from the sanctuary leads to the lower chambers of the basement and the exit door, which once connected this temple with that of Khonsu.

Temple of Mut

Now completely in ruins, the Temple of Mut was surrounded on three sides by a horseshoe-shaped lake. It was dedicated to the consort of Amon and comprised a pair of open courts, one following the other, and a sanctuary surrounded by ante-chambers. The construction extended through many generations from Amenhotep III to Ptolemaic times.

Among its many statues and murals is a grotesque figure of the god Bes, and at least 600 statues of the war-goddess Sekhmet in black granite. These surrounded the entire court, in places packed closely in double rows.

Amenhotep II was known for his enormous muscular strength. His arrows pierce a sheet of Asian copper. (Karnak Temple)



CHAPTER 4 THE NECROPOLIS INTRODUCTION

It was to the West, where the Sun God at the end of each day began his nocturnal journey through the underworld, that man also gained admittance to the hereafter. Life after death was a concept most deeply rooted in the minds of the ancient Egyptians. Since the earliest times they had seen the passing of the mortal body not as an end but as a beginning. Belief in the hereafter was the focal point of their outlook. It stimulated their thought, their moral principles and their art.

Man, as they saw him, comprised the body, the spirit (or *ba*), and the *ka*, a sort of guardian double which, though born at the same time, did not share death with him. After the passing of his mortal body man could live again through his *ka*, provided that it was nourished and surrounded by all that was necessary for a continued existence. His *ba* or spirit ascended to higher spheres and could fly around the world and return to the tomb, provided that his body was properly preserved. Without the body, in fact, there could be no continued existence. So it can readily be seen that the repository for the dead and the manner in which they were to be interred were of the utmost importance.

Even in pre-dynastic times the dead, laid to rest in simple oval pits surmounted by a pile of rubble, were covered with a protective animal skin and surrounded by pots containing food and drink, a few primitive weapons and ornaments. Each slow development from these crude pit burials through the *mastaba* development to the pyramid proper, and its ultimate abandonment in favour of rock-hewn tombs, was a battle to preserve the body. When a stone superstructure was placed atop a tomb in place of the rubble, this was because it was a stronger safeguard against the elements. When, in place of skin, linen cloth was used to swathe the body, this was because it afforded better protection. When the tombs were made deeper, when a system of blocking entrance passages was devised, when funerary customs underwent change, each stage was an advancement in the protection of the body to allow the deceased to live again, for ever.

Mastabas, low rectangular bench-like brick structures, were tombs. The earliest comprised a single burial chamber hewn deep in the ground, in which the deceased, placed in a wooden sarcophagus, lay surrounded by pottery jars filled with food, drink and ointments, and chests of weapons and jewellery. In the funerary room built in the superstructure there was a false door through which the *ka* could join the world of the living. In front of it was an offering table where relatives and friends could place food and drink to sustain the deceased in the hereafter.

Since tombs were regarded as the places where the deceased would dwell, they closely resembled contemporary houses both inside and out. Naturally, increased prosperity meant a better life and, since a man's good fortune led to an increased concern to take it all with him to the hereafter, the *mastaba* underwent transformation. It became larger and more complex, constructed to fit each individual's special requirements. The sarcophagus, still laid in the central chamber of the substructure, stood on a platform. Other chambers were constructed for the funerary equipment. Abundant food and drink meant more sustenance for the body. Perfected furniture meant more eternal comfort. Ointments, weapons, games, clothing, all meant a better after-life. And since it was desirable to be surrounded by loved ones, chambers were sometimes constructed for the wife, sons and daughters of the deceased.

But larger tombs and richer funerary equipment led to increased risk of violation by robbers. It is somewhat ironical that, whereas mummification was to be perfected and art and architecture were to rise to a high degree of sophistication, no secure method of hindering the robber was ever found. During fifty centuries tombs were violated, their contents taken and the bodies exposed to the elements.

The burial chamber and adjoining rooms for the funerary equipment were originally constructed first and then, after the superstructure was raised, the deceased and his belongings were lowered through the roof of the *mastaba*, down the pit and straight into the burial chamber. With bigger and more elaborate tombs, however, an easier means of entry had to be devised. Access was thenceforth made via a stairway from a point outside the superstructure and leading directly underground to the tomb chamber. It was hoped that robbers would be deterred by an elaborate system of blockings.

In many *mastabas* dating from the latter part of the 4th Dynasty a special room was constructed in the superstructure, separated by a wall from the other rooms. This was the *statue house*, now known

by the Arabic name of *serdab* or cellar, where a statue or statues of the tomb's owner were placed. It was considered as the seat for his *ka* and there were slits in the intervening wall which enabled the *ka* to see the light of day, watch the offering ceremonies and enjoy the scent of the burning incense. The slits themselves were known as *the eyes of the ka-house*. In this way the deceased, lying underground in his tomb chamber, had his *ka* supervising the offering ceremonies on his behalf. But how could he be sure that future generations of his relatives would continue to bring him food and drink? To ensure continued nourishment he had himself represented on the tomb walls in the act of receiving sacrificial offerings. These representations of food and drink were believed to serve him in place of the real thing. Not surprisingly this was only one step away from believing that anything depicted on the walls of a tomb was as good as the real thing: a well-stocked farmyard, healthy cattle, a large house and garden, numerous servants.

Royal tombs were originally large brick *mastabas*. In fact the Step Pyramid of Sakkara, the first stone building in history, started as a *mastaba* and grew to its characteristic proportions as a result of successive additions. Thenceforth the tombs of the head of state steadily surpassed the tombs of the people in size and magnificence. In time the steps were filled in and the outer casing was made smooth until the full pyramid form developed. These were vast stone structures, designed in geometrical simplicity, to safeguard the body of the deceased Pharaoh. To the east of each pyramid was a mortuary temple where a priesthood conducted rituals and maintained the tomb complex. A covered causeway connected it with a valley temple which stood at the foot of the plateau.

The pyramids, of which the great 4th Dynasty Pyramid of Khufu (Cheops) at Giza is the most famous, failed to safeguard the bodies of the Pharaohs. Though some of these vast structures stand as imperishable landmarks, they were probably robbed as early as the uncertain period following the fall of the monarchy at Memphis in the 6th Dynasty. Yet, surprisingly, for over six centuries, until Thutmose I came to the throne in the 18th Dynasty, the pyramid continued to be the tomb constructed for the royalty of Egypt.

Amenhotep I was the first Pharaoh to break with the ancient custom. He saw that the durable pyramids had failed to safeguard the bodies of his ancestors, that blind alleys and hidden chambers never fooled a robber. Now he attempted secrecy to give him the eternal security he craved. For his tomb he chose a site high

on the hills south of the Valley of the Kings and built his mortuary temple in the valley. His successor, Thutmose I, followed his innovation of separating the burial chamber from the mortuary temple, being the first Pharaoh to construct his tomb in the Valley of the Kings. His architect Ineni excavated it through solid rock across a precipitous valley, and recorded for posterity on a stele in his tomb that he carried out his Pharaoh's request 'no one seeing and no one hearing'. His mortuary temple was built at the edge of the verdant valley on the west bank of the Nile. Thus, he believed, could his cult be continued while his actual resting place was unknown.

This precedent was followed. The Pharaohs that succeeded Thutmose I in the 18th, 19th and 20th Dynasties continued to dig their tombs deep in the sterile valley which is now known as the *Valley of the Kings*. Royal consorts and children from the 19th Dynasty were buried at a separate site, the *Valley of the Queens*. Noblemen had their tombs dug at various cemeteries among the foothills of the range.

This is the Theban necropolis, the *City of the Dead*. It was not

El Fadliya Canal runs parallel with the Nile, at Luxor.



always as lifeless as we see it today. At one time beside each mortuary temple there were dwellings for the priests and stables for the sacrificial animals. Nearby were the guardhouses and granaries each with its superintendent. Surrounding or in front of each temple were lakes, groves and beautifully laid-out gardens.

A large community of labourers and craftsmen were engaged on the building, the decorating, the making of statue and sarcophagus, and, of course, on the very specialised job of preparing the deceased for the hereafter: mummification. The ruins of this community have been excavated near the temple of Der el Medina. Some 40,000 pieces of pottery and scraps of papyrus give fascinating revelations of the artists and artisans who lived there. The village comprised about eighty families, each possessing a small, uniform and sparsely furnished house. They worked under a strict system of administration and the people were classified according to their work. The designers and scribes were considered superior to the artists, painters and draughtsmen. The quarrymen and masons naturally came above the porters, diggers and mortar mixers. At the bottom of the scale were the watchmen and refreshment carriers. At the top, in charge of the whole community, were the Director of Works and the various foremen immediately under his control.

Attendance was strictly marked and an absent worker had to account for himself. The written excuses have survived the centuries. One had to 'visit my mother-in-law'. Another had to get urgent supplies from the market. Illness was a frequent excuse. The scandals, quarrels and complaints of the workers were all recorded. On one occasion a complaint reached the authorities that a chair, a box and a mirror were missing from the tomb of a worker. He described them in detail. A check was made. Nothing was found. But when Bruyère, leading the French Egyptological Expedition, was excavating the area he found the three described pieces in one of the small tombs in the surrounding cliffs where the dead of the village were buried!

There were also complaints of a more serious nature, as for example the backlog of salaries which led to the famous *Revolution of the 20th/21st Dynasties*, written on papyri and recording that the authorities failed to give allowances to the people of the village for two months. Payment normally came regularly each month in the form of charcoal, dried meat, fish, bandages and cloth, along with materials for their work. When the caravan failed to turn up the villagers staged a revolt and attempted to send representatives in

protest to Thebes. They were stopped from crossing the river. However, they did finally send the Omdah (headman) of the village to speak on their behalf and were consequently promised their salaries within a week.

The men of the village were all skilled workers. Those that toiled in the Valley of the Kings for ten day stretches slept in make-shift shelters in a mountain pass above the village until their term of work was over. On their return they had ample time to enjoy sculpting at leisure, making jewellery, household objects and statues of their own guardian deity, Hathor, to whom they built a small shrine. One village resident, Kha, a draughtsman who rose to the position of architect, placed in his tomb a selection of furniture which appears unused. It is doubtful whether he actually enjoyed these luxuries in his home. They were evidently placed in his tomb that they might ensure him a better after-life.

It is strange to note that nowhere on the Theban necropolis have the ruins of a mummification centre yet been found.

CHAPTER 5 THE NECROPOLIS MORTUARY TEMPLES

BACKGROUND

As we have seen, the reigning Pharaoh was the embodiment of the Sun God and the God of the Imperial Age. When he died and Amon cast his protective shield over his successor, the cult of the deceased Pharaoh was continued in his mortuary temple, which was also dedicated to Amon.

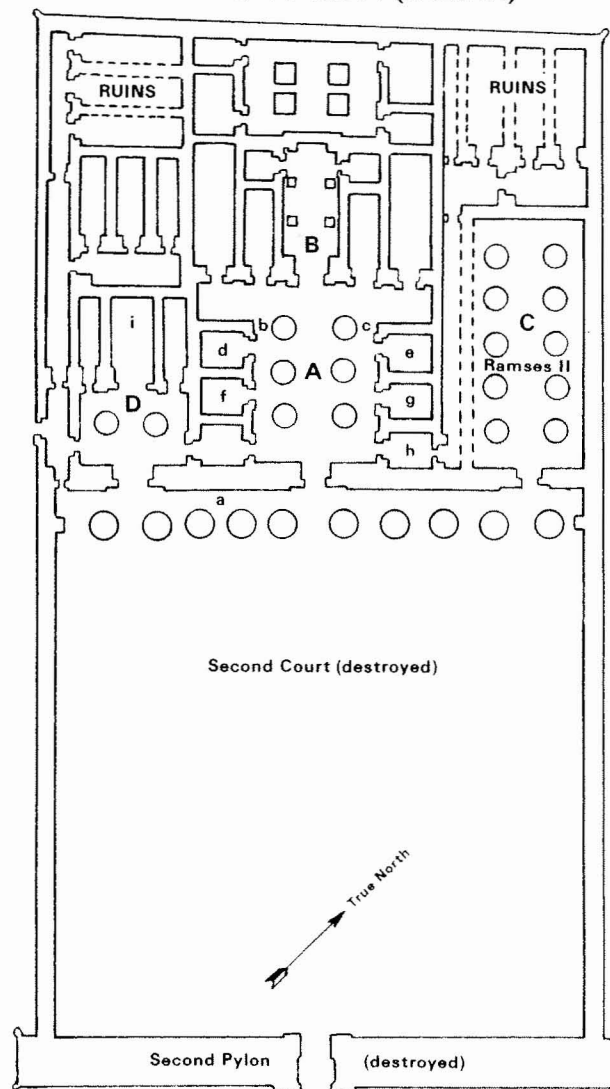
The largest of these temples, that of Amenhotep III, is no more; all that remain are the twin statues known as the Colossi of Memnon seated in solitary isolation in the plain. The mortuary temple of Seti I at Kurna contains some of the most exquisite relief work on the Theban necropolis. The most beautiful, Queen Hatshepsut's at Der el Bahri, lies slightly inland from the semi-circle along the valley's edge. The Ramasseum of Ramses II is a page in history, and Medinet Habu, the name given to a group of buildings begun in the 18th Dynasty and continuing to Roman times, includes a splendid temple built by Ramses III on the same pattern as the Ramasseum.

MORTUARY TEMPLE OF SETI I (KURNA): Plan II

Seti I was the Pharaoh who fought against the Libyans, Syrians and Hittites in an effort to win back the empire of Thutmose III. He succeeded in reconquering territories spreading from Mesopotamia to the island of Cyprus and carried home vast treasures to adorn his temples, both this one at Kurna and the marvellous one at Abydos. Seti encouraged art and architecture, and his two temples without doubt hold some of the most exquisite relief work in the entire Nile Valley.

Whilst approaching this 19th Dynasty mortuary temple it would be as well to remember that the execution of funerary art was inherited from long-established traditions and was considered sacred. Similar themes and unvarying treatment followed from one dynasty to the next, the only real difference lying in the competence of its execution. It is here that the real value of this temple lies. The

Plan II
MORTUARY TEMPLE OF SETI I (KURNA)



reliefs show that craftsmanship had reached a remarkable stage of maturity. There is little doubt that the artists in Seti's reign were aware of foreshortening and knew how to cope with it. Yet they interpreted their figures as did the artists of the Old Kingdom, never violating the pattern of established art. They merely concentrated their efforts on precise and refined detail.

This temple, apart from being constructed to continue the cult of the deceased Pharaoh and to honour Amon, was also built in reverent memory of Seti's father, Ramses I, who died before constructing a temple of his own. It was not completed by Seti I but by his son, Ramses II, who supplied the missing reliefs and inscriptions.

Of the original length of some 158 metres only about 47 metres of the temple remain, mostly the area containing the sanctuary, its halls and ante-chambers. Most of the frontal courts and pylons are in ruin but, because of the execution of the reliefs, a visit is immensely worthwhile. For example, just beyond the eight remaining columns of the colonnade are three doors leading to the inner part of the temple. The walls between, at (a), carry representations of the provinces of Upper Egypt—a man and a woman alternately—bearing dishes laden with flowers, cakes and wine (to the left) and similar representations of Lower Egypt (to the right). On their heads the former have lotuses, the emblem of Upper Egypt. The latter have papyrus, that of Lower Egypt. Above the left-hand relief the Pharaoh offers incense to the barge of Amon carried by priests. And above the right-hand relief he appears before various deities. It is immediately apparent that the lines are sensitive and refined while the drawing is boldly executed.

The *hypostyle hall* (A) which we enter through the middle doorway has slabs on the roof of the central aisle on which there are flying vultures, the winged sun-disc and the names of Seti I between two vertical rows of hieroglyphs. Low on the walls Seti I and Ramses II are seen before various deities. At (b) and (c) are Mut and Hathor, nourishing Seti.

On each side of the hypostyle hall are three chambers. The last two on each side, (d) (e) (f) and (g), have fine reliefs which depict Seti offering incense or performing ceremonies in the presence of the deities. In chamber (d) Thoth, the god of science, can be seen before the sacred barge of the Pharaoh (on the left-hand wall) while (on the right-hand wall) the Pharaoh is seated before an offering table. On the rear wall Seti is depicted as the god Osiris, seated in a shrine surrounded by deities. Chamber (h) bears the

sunken, cruder reliefs of Ramses II, who enters the temple (to the right) and offers incense to Amon, Mut and Khonsu (to the left).

Beyond the hypostyle hall is the *sanctuary* (B) which has four simple square pillars, and the decorations on the side walls depict Seti I offering incense before the barge of Amon. The base of Amon's sacred barge still stands here. The chambers beyond are in ruin.

In the right-hand division of the temple is a long hall of Ramses II (C). Again we can compare these sunken reliefs with those of the main building. They are clearly far inferior work.

On the corresponding left-hand division of the temple is a small shrine constructed by Ramses I (D) and probably usurped by Ramses II. Adjoining it are three chambers. In the middle one (i) Seti offers incense to the barge of Amon and, on the rear wall, is a stele shaped like a door, to Ramses II, who appears in Osiris form presided over by Isis as a hawk. The two flanking chambers have reliefs dating from Ramses II and show him before the deities.

MORTUARY TEMPLE OF QUEEN HATSCHEPSUT (DER EL BAHRI): Plan 12

Introduction

Framed by steep cliffs and poised in elegant relief, stands the temple of Der el Bahri. Justly deserving its name 'Most Splendid of All', it was the inspiration of the beautiful Queen Makere Hatshepsut, daughter of Thutmose I. What strikes one first when approaching this temple is its unity with nature. Far from being belittled by the stark purity of the cliffs behind, the temple was so designed that the cliffs form a backcloth.

Hatshepsut, whose royal lineage to the Great Royal Wife Ahmose made her the only lawful heir among Thutmose I's children, his sons being by minor wives, was prevented by her sex from succeeding as Pharaoh. She consequently married her half-brother Thutmose II. During his reign and her subsequent coregency with Thutmose III she retained power in her capable hands.

To appreciate the temple of Der el Bahri one must know a little of the character of the beautiful woman who conceived it. She was indisputably iron-willed and not willing to let the fact that she was a woman stand in her way. She assumed a throne name—Makere. She wore a royal shirt and ceremonial beard, the badges of kingship.

She proved her right to the throne in numerous reliefs of her divine birth.

Once Hatshepsut had secured her right to the throne she embarked on the building of temples and monuments and also on the restoration of damaged sanctuaries. This was perhaps especially important to her since she could hardly record her name in history through military conquest and sought to do so through architectural magnificence. The obelisks she had erected in Karnak temple (page 51) were so placed that the glittering tips should 'inundate the Two Lands just as it appears in the horizon of heaven'. And she planned her mortuary temple to be no less spectacular. Her architect Senmut, whilst drawing inspiration from the adjacent 11th Dynasty temple of the Pharaohs Mentuhotep II and III, carried it out on a very much larger scale. Adopting the idea of the terrace and adding an extra tier, he made such imposing use of it that he deserves special credit. He designed a terraced sanctuary comprising courts, one above the other with connecting inclined planes at the centre. Shrines were dedicated to Hathor and Anubis and chambers devoted to the cult of the queen and her parents.

It was a labour of love, for Senmut, who first entered the service of Hatshepsut as tutor to her daughter Nefrure, had ambitions and abilities that took him high on the ladder of success. He not only ended with no fewer than forty titles but conducted himself as a member of the royal family, enjoying privileges and prerogatives never before enjoyed by a man of humble birth. He was Hatshepsut's supporter and lover and doubtless also her political adviser. He was also granted a privilege accorded to no official before or after: that of constructing his tomb near the mortuary temple of his monarch.

Hatshepsut had two tombs. Her body was found in neither. The first she had dug in the Valley of the Kings where all members of the royal family were laid to rest in the 18th Dynasty. The second, after she became monarch, was in the Taket Zeid Valley, south of Der el Bahri and overlooking the Valley of the Kings. The former tomb was so designed that the corridors, burrowed 213 metres beneath the barrier hill, should lead to the tomb chamber itself directly beneath the mortuary temple. It was as though, while wishing to construct her tomb in the royal valley, she wanted at the same time to conform to the ancient practice of linking the tomb with the mortuary temple. She never achieved her goal. Bad rock or other causes led to the passage being continued in a swerve 98 metres below ground level and then abandoned. It is devoid of

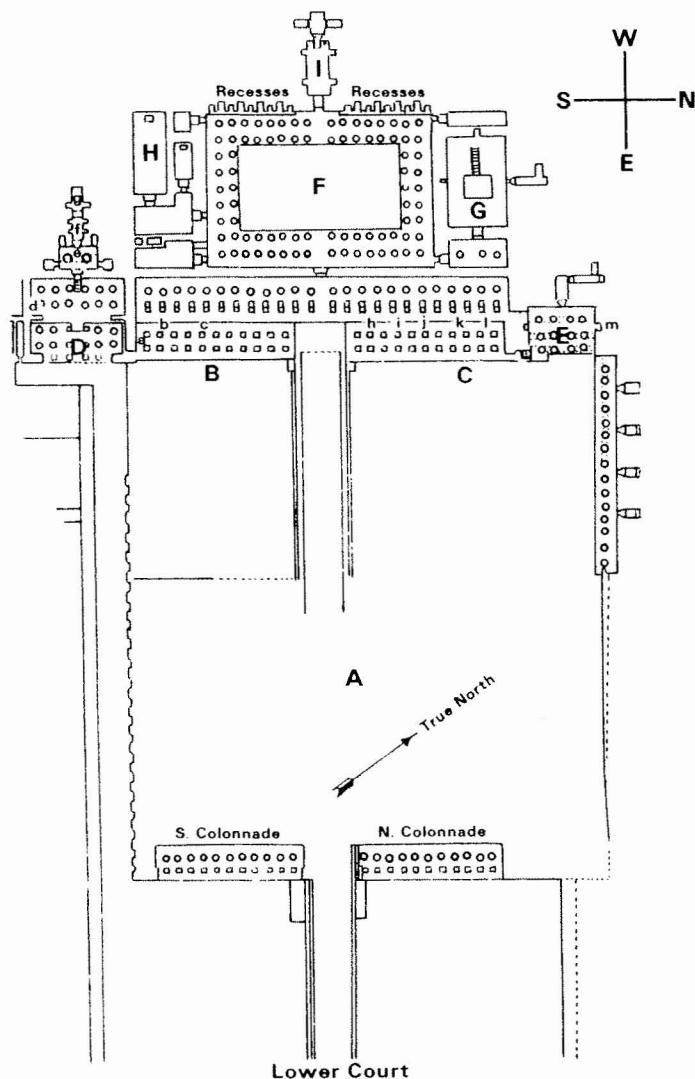
relief and inscription and, apart from limestone slabs relating chapters from the Book of the Dead in red and black sketch form, is a rather pathetic and crude passage. In her red sandstone sarcophagus the body of her father Thutmose I had been laid to rest, until the priests of the 20th Dynasty removed his mummy to the shaft of Der el Bahri (page 84) for safekeeping. In fact Hatshepsut's sarcophagus had been enlarged to receive his body. Why was Thutmose I laid to rest in his daughter's tomb? Because his own had already been used by Thutmose II, who died prematurely after a short co-regency with Hatshepsut. And Hatshepsut's mummy? It probably suffered the same fate as her statues and representations in murals. For, when Thutmose III finally asserted himself and expelled her from the throne, his years of frustrated energy swelled forth in a campaign of destruction when he obliterated from every temple throughout the land, but from Der el Bahri in particular, every reference to the female Pharaoh.

Later, when Ikhnaton removed references to Amon from the temples of Egypt, the inscriptions of Der el Bahri were further mutilated. Ramses II endeavoured to restore them but the work-

The Mortuary Temple of Queen Hatshepsut at Der el Bahri.



Plan 12
MORTUARY TEMPLE OF HATSCHEPSUT (Der el Bahri)



manship was inferior. And in this condition the beautiful temple remained, with only minor alterations taking place until Christian monks set up a convent there. Sadly, but understandably, they too scraped the walls and added to the overall desecration.

Two of the learned members of Napoleon's expedition to Egypt in 1798 first made the temple of Der el Bahri known to the modern world, releasing part of it from its sandy embrace. Champollion was responsible for deciphering the hieroglyphics and attempting to unravel the family feud. Mariette interpreted the picturesque reliefs of the Voyage to Punt. In 1894 the Egyptian Exploration Fund started to exhume the temple properly but their work was not completed for nine years. Some of the colonnades were roofed in and certain other necessary alterations were carried out to preserve the remaining reliefs and colonnades.

For several years now a Polish team has been excavating and reconstructing the temple. In 1969 they unearthed a small temple built by Thutmose III to the left of the upper terrace of Hatshepsut's temple and parallel with the rock-hewn inner chambers. In 1970 they unearthed what at first appeared to be another terrace but has since been described as a protective roof to the rear of the temple to safeguard against falling rock.

Lower and Central Courts

We ascend the temple of Der el Bahri from the *lower court* where two colonnades have been restored. These comprise twenty-two columns on each side arranged in double rows. In the southern colonnade is a scene showing two obelisks being transported by water (those Hatshepsut had erected at Karnak). The first row shows them on the deck of the barge and below a trumpeter leads a group of archers to the inauguration ceremony.

Passing between the two colonnades we come to the *central court* (Plan 12 A), which leads to the upper terrace. We are now faced with two famous colonnades. On the left (B) is the Colonnade of the Expedition to Punt. On the right (C) is the Birth Colonnade.

Punt Colonnade

The Punt Colonnade commemorates an expedition ordered by Queen Hatshepsut to the Land of Punt (in the East Africa/Somalia area) to bring back myrrh and incense trees to be planted on the terraces of the temple. The relief tells us that Amon himself ordered the expedition and it appears that Hatshepsut not only carried out the divine will but made the expedition a major mission.

On the southern wall (*a*) we can see the village in Punt where the houses are constructed over water with ladders leading up to the entrances. We can see the mayor of the city, the inhabitants, the grazing cattle and even the village dog. The Egyptian envoy and his entourage are greeted in welcome and are shown presenting merchandise for barter. The fat, deformed queen of Punt is there. The hieroglyphics relate that this illustrious monarch travelled by donkey and, with obvious wit, the artists have shown the little donkey itself. Throughout the span of Egyptian history, from pre-dynastic times to the fall of the empire, it was not often that deformed or physically handicapped persons were sculpted or drawn. The few that were belonged to the earlier dynasties and were people of the lower classes. The portrayal of the queen of Punt suffering from the swollen legs of elephantiasis, and without even a royal carriage for transport, makes one feel that neither Hatshepsut nor her artists had much respect for her.

On the back wall at (*b*) the Egyptian fleet sets sail, arrives in Punt and we see the transportation of the incense trees planted in small tubs (top row) and on board the vessel (lower row). These will be carried back to Der el Bahri, there to be planted in the court. In fact the roots are still on site to this day.

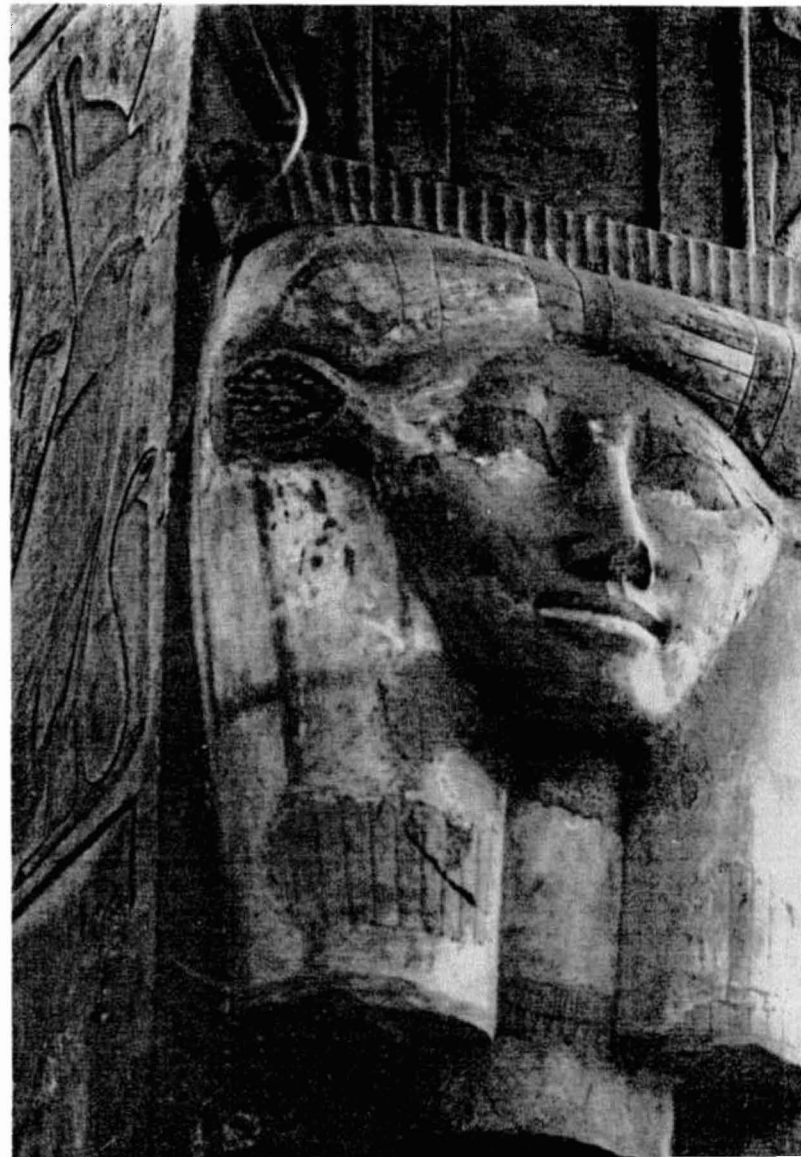
One cannot but feel, divine will notwithstanding, that more than a little of Hatshepsut's whim and fancy went into the elaboration of the whole mission. In a joyous representation at the centre of the long back wall (*c*) the queen (defaced) can be seen offering the fruits of her expedition to Amon: incense trees, wild game, cattle, electrum and bows. The whole mural speaks of success and pleasure.

Shrine of Hathor

To the left of the Colonnade of Punt stands the Shrine of Hathor (*D*). It has two roofed-in colonnades with Hathor columns leading to the shrine itself which comprises three chambers, one behind the other, and each with several recesses. In the colonnaded court is a large sacrificial scene on the southern wall (*d*) showing a boat containing the Hathor-cow with Queen Hatshepsut drinking from the udder. On the rear western wall is a representation of Thutmose II (replacing Hatshepsut) having his hand licked by the Hathor-cow.

In the first chamber (*e*) Hatshepsut or Thutmose III is represented with several of the deities. The colour is excellent, especially on the ceiling which is decorated with stars on a blue sky. The

Hathor column from the Shrine of Hathor, Der el Bahri.



second room (*f*) shows Hatshepsut (scraped) making offerings to Hathor, who stands on the sacred barge beneath the canopy. This is a relief of unusual beauty. Ehi, son of Horus, is the little nude boy who holds a sistrum in front of the queen. The third room (*g*) has an unusual pointed roof and the wall reliefs show Hatshepsut (on each of the side walls) drinking from the udder of the cow, Hathor, with Amon standing before them. On the back wall is another particularly beautiful relief of Hatshepsut standing between Hathor and Amon with the latter holding before her face the hieroglyph symbol of life.

Birth Colonnade

The Birth Colonnade corresponds exactly to the Punt Colonnade. As already mentioned, it was constructed to allay concern about Hatshepsut's right to the throne. The theory of divine origin was above discussion, let alone dispute, and this is shown in a scene of the ram-headed Khnum shaping Hatshepsut and her *ka* on the potter's wheel (*h*) under instructions from Amon who has impregnated the queen mother. Among the particularly fine representations is that of the queen mother Ahmose (*i*), full with child. She radiates joy and stands dignified in her pregnancy, smiling a smile of supreme contentment as she is led to the birth room. Unfortunately most of the scene in which Amon and the queen mother are borne to the heavens by two goddesses seated on a lion-headed couch, is badly damaged. But the grotesque figure of the god Bes can be seen in the lower row (*j*).

In the scene of the actual birth the queen mother sits on a chair which is placed on a couch held aloft by various gods. This in turn stands upon another couch also supported by gods. The queen mother has a retinue of female attendants. Hathor then presents Hatshepsut to Amon and the twelve *kas* of the divine child are suckled by twelve goddesses (*k*). Hatshepsut and her *ka* have been erased but in the scene at the end of the wall (*l*) they pass through the hands of various goddesses who record the divine birth. Hatshepsut's mother is shown in the presence of the ibis-headed Thoth, the ram-headed Khnum and the frog-headed Heket. She also converses with Amon who tells her that her daughter shall exercise kingship throughout the land.

By depicting Hatshepsut as a boy and by repeating the theme of Amon laying a hand of blessing on her shoulder, the most important prejudices against her rule are overcome.

Small and Upper Courts, Sanctuary

To the right of the Birth Colonnade is a small court (*E*) comprising twelve sixteen-sided columns in three rows, and leading to the chapel of Anubis, which has three chambers. The walls of the court have excellently preserved reliefs, though representations of the queen have all been damaged. On the right-hand wall (*m*) above the small recess is a scene of the monarch making a wine-offering to the hawk-headed Sokaris, god of the dead. On the rear wall offerings are made to Amon (to the left) and Anubis (to the right) with the sacrificial gifts heaped up before each.

The *Upper Court* (*F*) was the part of the temple that suffered most severely at the hands of the Christian monks. It has been closed to visitors for more than a year for reconstruction. It includes a small vestibule leading to one of the few altars (*G*) to come down to us from antiquity on their original sites, and to a sacrificial hall (*H*) with reliefs adorning the walls. At the back of the court are a number of small recesses, some larger than others, and the central recess leads into the sanctuary itself which was cut directly into the cliff backing the temple. The granite portal forming the entrance dates from the time of the Ptolemies.

The *Sanctuary* (*I*) comprises three chambers. The first two have vaulted ceilings and adjoining recesses. In the first chamber is a scene (on the upper reaches of the right-hand wall) of Hatshepsut, Thutmose III and their little daughter, Princess Ranofru, sacrificing to the barge of Amon. Behind them are the queen's father Thutmose I with his wife Ahmose and their little daughter Bitnofru. A similar scene, somewhat damaged, is represented on the left-hand wall, with Thutmose III kneeling. In the inner room of the sanctuary the reliefs show a marked deterioration from the worthy representations in the reign of Hatshepsut. This room was restored by Euergetes II.

As already mentioned, Hatshepsut's mummy was never found. It was neither in the tomb she constructed in the Valley of the Kings, nor in the one excavated south of the mortuary temple, nor in the shaft at Der el Bahri, nor in the tomb of Amenhotep II, the 'Safety Tomb'. Whether she was poisoned that Thutmose III might take over the throne, stabbed by her lover, killed by officials jealous of Senmut's favour, or died a natural death remains a matter for speculation.

DER EL BAHRI—SHAFT AND CAVERN

The Shaft at Der el Bahri

In 1881 a twelve metre shaft was excavated at the foot of the precipitous cliffs to the north of Der el Bahri. It was found to contain no less than forty mummies of Egypt's ancient monarchs, all of which now lie in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

The story of this discovery goes back to 1876, when various antique objects began to appear on the market at Luxor, slowly at first but with a steadily increasing flow. Obviously some royal tomb was being ransacked. Enquiries—some subtle, some otherwise—yielded nothing. Although the *felaheen* of Kurna were clearly involved it was also abundantly clear that they intended to keep quiet. When funerary statuettes of King Pamejem followed the flow of important papyri on the market the Director of Antiquities, Sir Gaston Maspero, redoubled his efforts in search of a solution.

The only substantial clue seemed to lead to a prominent antiquities merchant, Abd el Rasool Ahmed. Yet even when his sullen silence was broken and he agreed to a cross-examination, it led nowhere. His talent for denial was masterly. And, since he was such a respected citizen with so many supporters who could vouch for his honesty and innocence, there was complete deadlock.

Ironically enough it was a family rivalry that led to his betrayal. His eldest brother finally led Emile Brugsch, in the absence of Maspero, to the site. A shaft was found in one of the coves of the range of hills separating the Valley of the Kings from Der el Bahri. In the words of Maspero himself it was: 'A catacomb crammed with Pharaohs!' It included some of the most famous kings of the 18th and 19th Dynasties such as Amenhotep I, Thutmose II, Thutmose III, Seti I, Ramses II and Ramses III. One of the mummies was that of Sekenenre, an Egyptian prince during the time of the Hyksos. Mummification had been carried out only after some decomposition had set in and it showed that he had met an extremely violent death; his jaw was crushed and there were signs of three other blows, each of which could have been fatal, on the head. Merneptah, thought by some scholars to be the Pharaoh of the Exodus, was missing. Drowned in the Red Sea? Many thought so until, some eighteen years later, his mummy turned up with twelve others in the tomb of Amenhotep II, where they had also been hidden by the priests for safety.

These hiding-places represent a pathetic last attempt to safe-

guard the bodies of Egypt's deceased Pharaohs from robbery. That the hidden Valley of the Kings was no safer than the huge pyramids was quickly made evident. And when the country experienced Ikhnaton's reformation, tomb-robbing became a free-for-all, especially in the desolate Valley of the Kings, and with every indication of official connivance. At the beginning of the 19th Dynasty Harmhab issued instructions for the reburial of Thutmose IV. His successors Seti I and Ramses II endeavoured to enforce better security but the situation became worse as central authority lapsed under the later Ramessides and violation of the burial places was resumed. The temptation in the form of pure bullion alone was more than enough to turn desire into an epidemic of greed. One has only to see the solid gold coffin, gold statuettes, shrines and jewellery of Tutankhamon, who was the youngest and one of the least important of the Pharaohs of Egypt, to have some idea of the lost treasures of the necropolis.

When robbers were caught in ancient times they were duly tried and punished. Two papyri, known as the Abbott and Amherst papyri after their discoverers, not only confirm this but give details of the transportation of the mummies to the obscure shaft at Der el Bahri. No less than sixty priests and officials of the necropolis were arrested at the time for complicity in the desecration of the tombs. Abd el Rasool was merely the tail end of a long history of pillage.

The Cavern at Der el Bahri

Before leaving Der el Bahri, mention must be made of a cavern situated on an elevated mountain ledge above the mortuary temple. Though it is not easily accessible, reference is made to it because it was used by the workers on the temple as a resting-place and the walls are covered with sketches and spare-time doodles. They depicted their despised overseer in several unflattering and somewhat crude activities and are valuable as being amongst the few examples of free individual expression. In these sketches the artist not the artisan was at work and the theme was entirely his own.

**MORTUARY TEMPLE OF RAMSES II
(THE RAMASSEUM): Plan 13****Introduction**

This magnificent mortuary temple is unfortunately half in ruin. It compares in both construction and quality of material with the mortuary temple of Seti I at Kurna but not in the artistic execution

retreat in confusion only to fall headlong into the Orontes, the Hittites take refuge in their fortress. The reliefs on the right-hand half of the tower show the Pharaoh grasping enemies by the hair whilst smiting them.

First and Second Courts

The *first court* of the Ramasseum (*A*) is mostly in ruin. Towards the rear, before the ancient western gate, lie the remains of what was once a *colossus* of the king and one of the most enormous pieces of stone ever shaped to such perfection (*c*). This massive statue, or rather the remains of the chest, upper arm, foot, etc., shows work of superb craftsmanship even to the final polish. When the French expedition under Napoleon visited Egypt careful measurements were made of the various remaining parts and it was estimated that the statue's total height must have been over seventeen metres and its weight over one thousand tons. In other words this granite statue not only exceeded in size the Colossi of Memnon (page 100), but also most of the statues of Ramses' ancestors. Its transportation from the granite quarries of Aswan in one piece is almost impossible to conceive. Hatshepsut's obelisks at Karnak were only one third of the weight.

On passing the colossal remains we enter the *second court* (*B*), which is in a much better state of preservation. It has colonnades on all four sides, those to the rear on a terrace. Facing the court are statues of Osiris and the representations on the column shafts show Ramses II sacrificing to the deities. This court was the one identified with the Augustan historian Diodorus' description of the 'Tomb of Osymandyas'. 'Osymandyas' may be explained as a corrupt form of User-ma-re, one of the names of Ramses II. The two colossal monoliths of the king (*d*), which must once have towered over the pylons of the Ramasseum, inspired Shelley to write his famous poem *Ozymandias*.

In this court are well preserved scenes of the battle of Kadesh (*e*). Ramses II dashes into battle (lower row). He is depicted larger than his men, and the enemy, mostly dead and wounded, lie in heaps on the ground. The fortress of Kadesh, surrounded by a moat, divides a group of the enemy from the battlefield. These men, far from preparing themselves for battle, are lending a hand to their drowning companions. Though this mural has been considered by some as a pretentious interpretation, there is no doubt that the complexity of the composition shows development and sophistication. The individual figures, however, indicate marked deteriora-

tion from the expressive detail of the murals of Seti I's mortuary temple.

Higher on the wall (*e*) are scenes from the Festival of the God Min which was celebrated when the Pharaoh came to the throne. The priests, who stand to the side of the king and await a procession headed by other priests carrying images of the royal ancestors, let forth four birds to carry the royal tidings to the four corners of the earth. Further to the right the Pharaoh cuts a sheaf with a sickle for presenting to the god. Murals portraying such festivals are immensely effective. The artists' ability to depict battle action is less so in view of the stylized treatment of the human form.

At the back of the court are some stairs, and on the rear wall to the left (*f*) are three rows of relief work. The bottom row depicts Ramses II as a family man with his eleven sons. The middle row (left) shows the hawk-headed Montu holding the hieroglyph for life before the king's face and (right) the king kneels before the Theban triad while Thoth, who is behind him, writes his years on a palm-leaf. In the top row he is making a sacrifice to Ptah and offering incense to Min.

Remains of the colossal monolith of Ramses II in his Mortuary Temple, the Ramasseum.



Hypostyle Hall

The Hypostyle Hall (C), which follows a small flight of stairs at the centre back of the court, is markedly similar to the one at Karnak. Both have three aisles, the taller columns at the centre with calyx capitals and the lower ones at the sides with bud capitals. As at Karnak the difference in height is made up by a wall with openings for light. The hypostyle hall of the Ramasseum is less cumbersome than that of Karnak. The columns appear more graceful and better proportioned. Throughout the hall the representations depict Ramses II in battle. This time the troops with ladders storm the fortress of Zapur (*g*—lower row). The Pharaoh dashes into the thick of battle in his chariot (to the left), leaving the enemy in flight or scattered on the ground. To the right the attacking Egyptians scale the fortress on ladders and push up to the walls under the protection of storming-sheds and shields. The sons of the Pharaoh took part and proved themselves worthy of their heroic father. Each is identifiable by his name engraved beside him.

On the western walls (*h*) and (*i*) the sons of Ramses II are shown (in the lower rows). Above them (at *h*) the Pharaoh is followed by a goddess in the presence of Amon and Mut. Above the princes (at *i*) he is depicted before Amon and Khonsu with the lion-headed Sekhmet behind him.

Smaller hypostyle halls

Beyond the hypostyle hall are two smaller hypostyle halls falling one behind the other in the middle of the remaining chambers which spread backwards and sideways from the few standing walls. The first (*D*) has astrological representations on the roof and on the eastern walls (*j*) and (*k*) priests bear the sacred boats of Amon, Mut and Khonsu, each decorated with the head of its god. On the rear right-hand wall (*l*) Ramses is seated beneath the sacred tree of Heliopolis, on the leaves of which his names are being written by Atum, who is seated on a throne to the left, with a goddess and Thoth to the right.

The second hypostyle hall (*E*) is mostly in ruin. It has some sacrificial representations including a scene (*m*) of Ramses burning incense to Ptah and the lion-headed Sekhmet.

The Portrayal of Ramses II

When looking at the murals of the Ramasseum, recording the wars of conquest and aggrandisement, one cannot help recognising this

as a very early form of mass persuasion. On no monument, wall, column or pylon, is there a record of a single governmental setback, neither through internal ferment nor through military defeat. The Pharaoh is always a hero. His chronicles are always glorious. And none are more glorious than those of Ramses II. According to his royal scribe, Pentaur, when he and his chariot driver were separated from the army and hopelessly surrounded by the enemy, the fearless Ramses II six times charged the foe single-handed. He hewed them down with his sword and trampled them under the wheels of his chariot. According to Pentaur, Ramses overthrew 2,500 enemy chariots, scattered 100,000 warriors and drove the rest into the water!

Ramses II's feats on the home front do not have to be exaggerated. They stand today as proof of his abilities. He was the Pharaoh who dug out the heart of a mountain at Abu Simbel in order to fashion within it a great hall and no less than fifteen spacious chambers. He faced the hollowed construction with four carved colossi that, even in a seated position, tower to a height of 20 metres. Ramses II will always remain a central figure in

Statues of Osiris in the second court of the Ramasseum.



Egyptian history and one that can be forgiven for claiming full credit, here and there, for work begun by his ancestors.

MORTUARY TEMPLE OF RAMSES III (MEDINET HABU)

Introduction

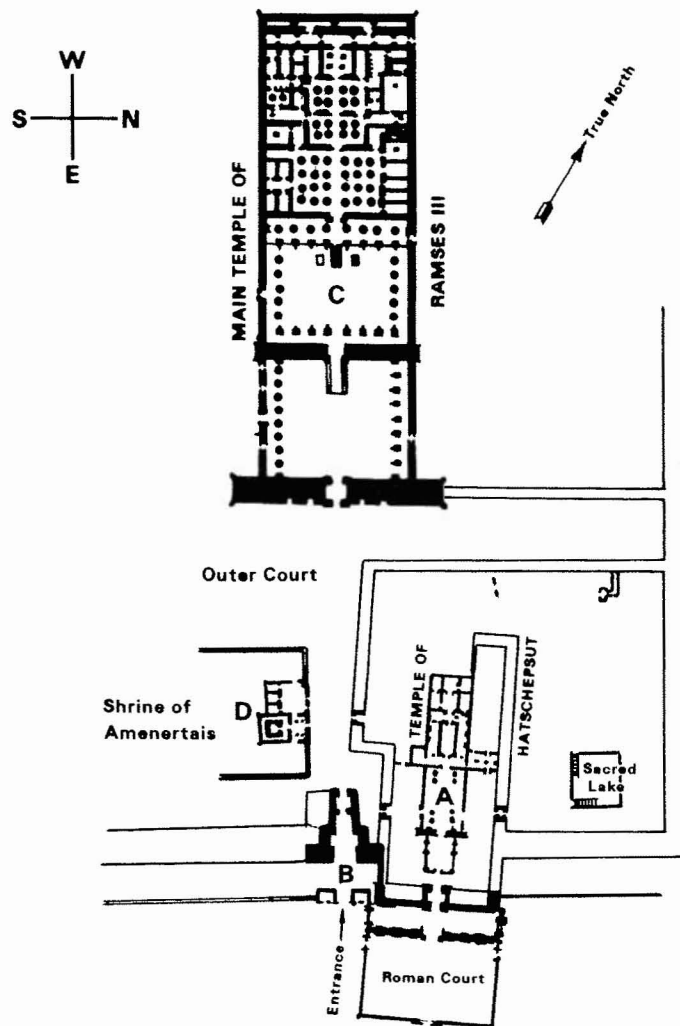
Medinet Habu is the name given by the early Christians to a group of buildings dating from the beginning of the 18th Dynasty and continuing right through to Roman times. The original structure was built by Amenhotep I and was added to by Hatshepsut and Thutmose III who formed it into a small, graceful temple (Plan 14 A). Ramses III built an unusual entrance structure (B) which took the place of the regular entrance pylon and portals of stone. This structure is known as the *Pavilion*, the name given by the French scholars accompanying Napoleon. Ramses III also built a splendid mortuary temple (C) which is one of the best examples of the smaller type of sanctuaries of the time. Under the Ptolemies and the Romans the temple was enlarged and the complex elaborated. Much of it came to grief following the rise of Christianity. A church was in fact built in the main court.

We enter the Medinet Habu complex through the pavilion. In front of it are two small watch-towers and a battlement of elevated masonry. It has two upper stories containing several small apartments. Passing through the end gateway we enter an outer court. The 18th Dynasty Temple, begun by Amenhotep I and added to by Hatshepsut and Thutmose III during their co-regency, lies to the right. It was completed during the latter's sole monarchy and bears traces of drastic alteration by both Thutmose II and III, who scraped off all the queen's original reliefs, especially in the inner chambers. Restorations were made by Harmhab and Seti I to the figures of the deities defaced by Ikhnaton. The ancient ground plan is drastically altered in Ptolemaic and Roman times and little of it is distinguishable today.

To the left is a small shrine of Amenertais (D), the mother-in-law of Psemmetikh I, and further back is the main temple of Ramses III.

The mortuary temple of Ramses III at Medinet Habu was built on exactly the same plan as the Ramasseum. The paint on the reliefs is well preserved, in some places in nearly perfect condition. This temple grew through successive years and, as the campaigns

Plan 14
MEDINET HABU COMPLEX



of Ramses were graphically recorded with its growth, his military exploits can be followed step by step from the rear, or in other words from his last military campaign on the foremost pylon, backwards in time.

First Pylon, First Court

The *first pylon* (Plan 15 P.1) is covered on both sides with representations and inscriptions recording Ramses III's victory over the Libyans in the 11th year of his reign. On the right-hand tower (a) the Pharaoh stands before Amon (to the right) in the traditional pose of dangling enemies by the hair whilst smiting them with a club. The captured lands—circular forts inscribed with the name of the city and mounted on bound enemies—are handed to him by the hawk-headed Montu. Between the grooves for the flagstaffs (to the left) is a similar scene on a smaller scale, and below it is a long poetic description in exaggerated language of the great victory. At the foot of the pylon Amon is seated (to the left) with Ptah standing behind him inscribing the Pharaoh's name on a palm-leaf. The Pharaoh kneels before Amon and receives from him the hieroglyphs for 'jubilee of the reign' suspended on a palm-branch. Thoth writes the king's years on the leaves of the tree.

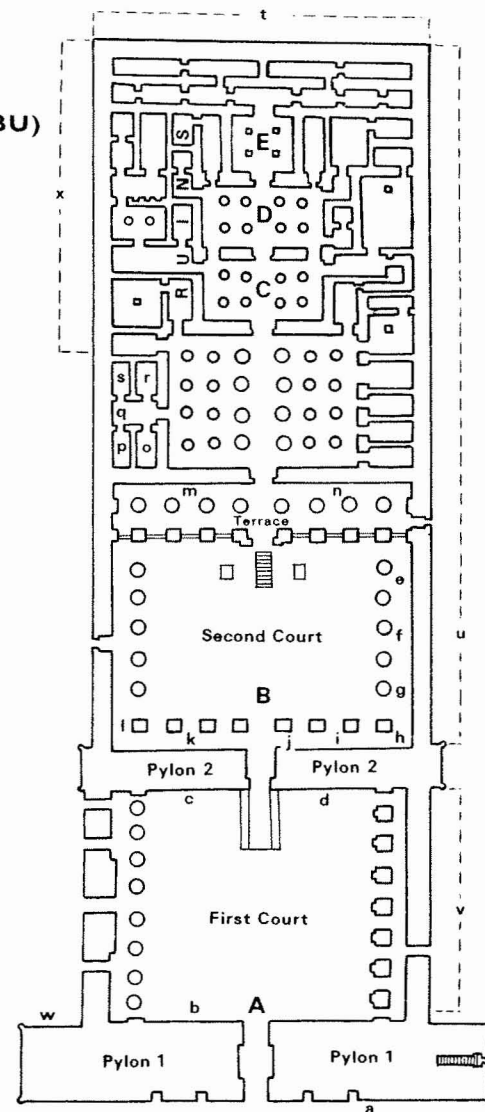
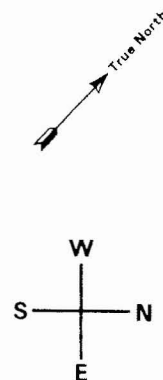
The left-hand tower of the entrance pylon repeats these scenes and inscriptions.

Passing through the central portal, which is embellished with representations of Ramses III worshipping the various deities, we enter the *first court* (A) and view an interesting representation on the inner side of the first pylon (b). This is also of the Libyan campaign. The mercenaries who took part are recognisable by their round helmets ornamented with horns. The charioted Pharaoh charges and overthrows the enemy. This court is flanked by covered colonnades, those to the right with colossal statues of the king as Osiris in front of each. The scenes on the side walls repeat the victorious war themes and the triumphant return of the king with his captives to attend the Great Feast of Amon.

Second Pylon, Second Court

At the back of the court is the *second pylon* (P.2) recording the Pharaoh's battles in the eighth year of his reign. On the left-hand tower (c) he leads three rows of prisoners to Amon and Mut. These prisoners do not have beards, which usually denote Asian peoples, but wear caps adorned with feathers and aprons decorated with tassels. The right-hand tower (d) has a long series of inscriptions

Plan 15
MORTUARY
TEMPLE
OF RAMSES III
(MEDINET HABU)



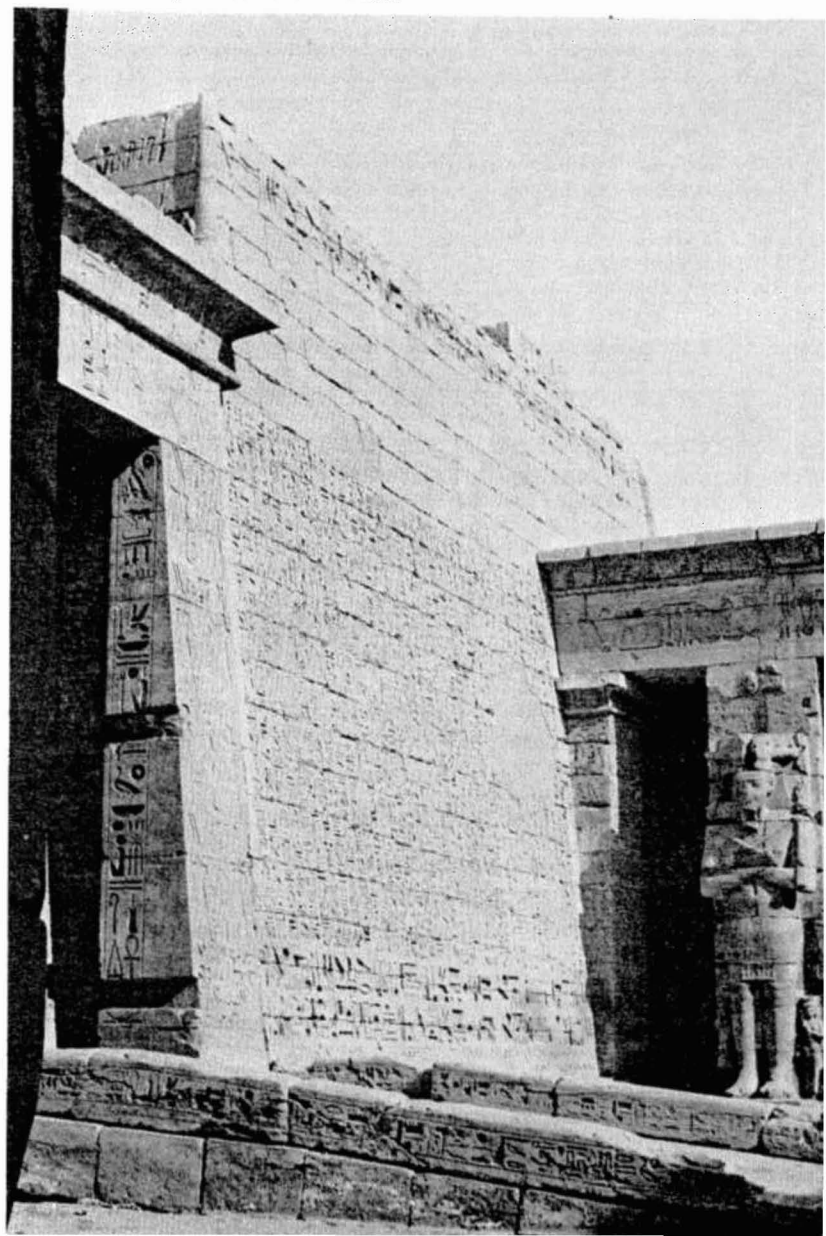
recording Ramses' military triumph over 'the Great League of Sea-Peoples'.

An inclined plane leads us through the granite gateway of the second pylon and into the *second court (B)*, which was the area converted into a church. It was fully cleared of remnants of the Christian period in 1895 and this proved to be one instance where we can thank the early Christians for preserving rather than destroying. For it is due to their having covered the original representations with mud, to avoid distracting the congregation no doubt, that they are in such good condition today. This court is an almost exact replica of the second court of the Ramasseum, both in architectural layout and in the relief drawings. On the back walls of the colonnades are scenes from the life of the Pharaoh including important festivals and warlike deeds.

On the right-hand side of the court (upper rows) are scenes from the Great Festival of the God Min. As in the mural of the Ramasseum, there is a lovely representation including trumpeters, drummers and castanet players. At (e) the Pharaoh is borne on a richly-decorated litter with a canopy from the palace, led by priests and soldiers and followed by his sons and courtiers. At the head of the line (upper row) are a trumpeter and a drummer and in the lower row castanet players. At (f) the king sacrifices before the image of Min and offers incense. Then comes a scene of the sacred procession: it starts on the right-hand wall at (g) and continues round the corner to (h). Studying the scene from left to right, we see priests, flanked by fan-bearers; the priests carry the image of Min on a litter. Next more priests with the sacred caskets. Then come the Pharaoh, the sacred white bull of Min, priests, the queen and a procession of priests in two rows carrying standards and images of the Pharaoh and his ancestors. Further to the right the Pharaoh awaits the procession and the priests allow four birds to fly to the four corners of the earth to carry the royal tidings. At (i) the Pharaoh cuts a sheaf of corn with his sickle in the presence of priests and his queen (above). The white bull again appears in front of the Pharaoh and beneath is a series of images of royal ancestors. At (j) the Pharaoh is shown offering incense to the god Min as he stands beneath a canopy.

The *colonnade* on the left-hand side of the court has scenes from the Festival of Ptah-Sokaris in the upper rows, and the much more interesting war reliefs in the lower divisions on the wall, starting with the inner wall of the second pylon (k). The first scene shows the Pharaoh attacking the Libyans with his charioteers as he shoots

Second Pylon of the Temple of Ramses III at Medinet Habu.



with his bow and the infantry flee in all directions. The mercenaries are in the lower row. The second scene shows him returning from battle with three rows of fettered Libyans before him and two fan-bearers behind. The third scene shows him leading his prisoners of war before Amon and Mut. These are themes we have met before, particularly on the first pylon of Ramses III's little temple in the court of Karnak (page 41), but with the addition of an interesting scene in the corner (*l*). This shows the Pharaoh turning in his chariot to receive four rows of prisoners of war from, amongst other notables, his own sons. Hands and phalluses (uncircumcised) of the slain are counted.

The rear walls of the terrace (*m*) and (*n*) have three rows of representations. In the two upper rows the Pharaoh is shown worshipping various deities. The lowest row depicts the royal princes and princesses.

Great Hypostyle Hall

The Great Hypostyle Hall follows. The roof was originally supported by twenty-four columns in six rows of four, with the eight columns forming the double central row considerably thicker than the others. The wall reliefs show Ramses III in the presence of various deities. Adjoining each side of the hypostyle hall are a series of chambers which stored costly jewels, musical instruments, etc. Ramses III was the last of the great Pharaohs and also the wealthiest. As he offers the fruits of earlier conquests, coupled with his own, to Amon, one can see that this is no exaggeration. In chamber (*o*) he presents Amon with papyrus-holders in the form of lions with the Pharaoh's head or kneeling figures of the Pharaoh. In chamber (*p*) costly vessels, with lids of rams', hawks', or Pharaohs' heads, are handed to Amon. Chamber (*q*) shows the Pharaoh handing Amon sacks of precious stones and in (*r*) costly table-services, harps, silver, lead and ornaments. Again, in chamber (*s*) he offers heaps of gold and other precious metals to Amon. The chambers to the right of the hypostyle hall contain mostly sacrificial scenes before the various deities.

Beyond the hypostyle hall are three smaller chambers (*C*, *D* and *E*). The first two have eight columns each and the third has four pillars. The surrounding chambers are dedicated to different deities.

Exterior

On the outside of the temple there are important historical reliefs

commemorating the wars of Ramses III. Those on the western wall (*t*) have scenes of the Pharaoh's battle against the Nubians. The actual battle scene, the triumphal procession with captives and the presentation to Amon, are shown. The northern wall has ten scenes from the wars against the Libyans and a naval victory over a northern people. The naval battle (at *u*) is an extremely animated representation: having alighted from his chariot the Pharaoh shoots against the hostile fleet. Before him are archers. Above him, in the form of a vulture, hovers the goddess of Lower Egypt. One enemy ship has capsized and the Egyptian vessels—distinguishable by a lion's head on the prow—are steered by men with large oars whilst the rest of the crew row from benches. There are bound captives inside the ship. Others appear in the lower row. The northern wall (at *v*) has scenes from the Syrian wars including the storming of a fortress and the presentation of prisoners to Amon and Khonsu.

There is little doubt that these reliefs show a decline in artistic ability. The painstaking detail of Seti I's reliefs is lost. These are cruder in execution and the composition is somewhat lackadaisical

Ramses III presents wine to the deities. Scene from his Mortuary Temple at Medinet Habu.



compared to the relief work of the 18th Dynasty. There is, however, one relief that reflects artistic inheritance from earlier times. This is the hunt for deer, wild bull and wild asses in a marshy area, and it can be seen on the southern wall on the back of the first pylon (m). The Pharaoh has already slain one bull which lies on the ground. Others escape into the thicket and the artist has endeavoured to create depth by showing the bull hiding between the rushes. As a three-dimensional approach it is extremely effective. On the southern wall (at x) is a *festival calendar* which includes a list of appointed sacrifices dating from Ramses III's accession to the throne.

COLOSSI OF MEMNON

Two massive statues, sadly weathered by time and now of no artistic merit, sit in stately isolation in the fertile lower valley of the necropolis. They once formed an impressive entrance to the mortuary temple of Amenhotep III and are solitary relics of his golden era. The mortuary temple itself was probably destroyed by royal vandals of the 19th Dynasty: Ramses II and his son Merneptah apparently had no scruples about pillaging the most awe-inspiring temple on the necropolis in order to build one for themselves.

These two statues rise to a height of twenty metres above the plain. They were made of sandstone under the supervision of the Pharaoh's chief architect, Amenhotep son of Hapu, who transported them from the quarries on eight barges along the Nile during the annual flood. The one on the left is in a better state of repair and shows Amenhotep III seated and flanked by his mother Metamwa and his wife Tiy. A third figure between the legs has been destroyed. On each side of the seat are representations of two Nile-gods winding the papyrus and lotus, symbols of Lower and Upper Egypt, round the hieroglyph for 'unite'.

The Colossi of Memnon were so named by the Romans who believed them to be statues of the legendary son of Aurora, goddess of the dawn. Memnon had slain Antilochus during the Trojan War—the latter being the valiant son of Nestor—and had himself finally fallen at the hand of Achilles. The first visitors to the necropolis during the Roman epoch interpreted the strange sounds they heard emerging from the statues at dawn each day as Memnon greeting his mother Aurora.

The myth grew and tourists flocked to see and hear for themselves. The number of Greek and Latin inscriptions, in both prose and verse, on the legs of the statues, attest to each having heard

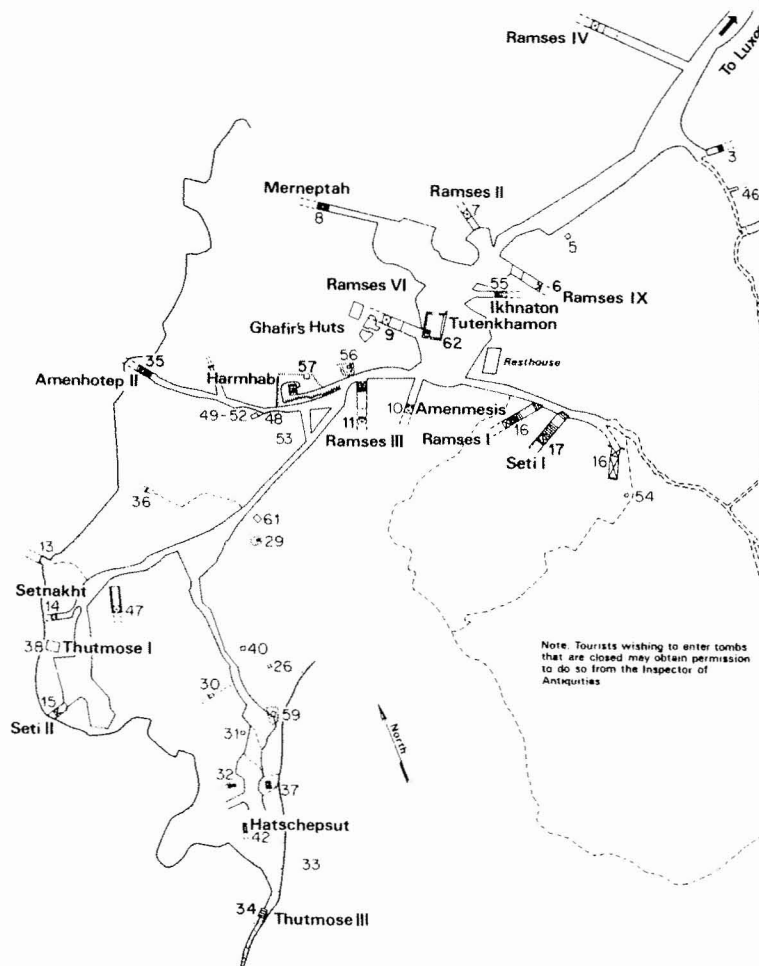
the sound for himself. Some said it was a musical note, others a trumpet blast. Others still said that they could hear voices chanting, or the sound of an angry god. It was a great tourist attraction. The curious were subsequently followed by the eminent. Physicists came—and exploded the myth utterly. It was, they said, the contracting of the stone during the cool nights following expansion during the day that caused a splitting off of particles from the surface.

Be that as it may the sound completely stopped when, in the time of Septimius Severus, the Colossi were repaired and some of the holes were filled in. It has never been heard since.

The Colossi of Memnon.



TOMBS OF THE KING

CHAPTER 6 THE NECROPOLIS
THE VALLEY OF THE KINGS

BACKGROUND

The Valley of the Kings, otherwise known as *Biban el Muluk*, is situated about two miles inland from the edge of the valley. A tarmac road makes the distance seem short. Before its construction a visitor had a sense of the arid remoteness of the site chosen by the Pharaohs of the 18th, 19th and 20th Dynasties for their tombs. There are over sixty in the valley.

The Pharaohs of the New Kingdom, as already explained, chose to separate their tombs from their mortuary temples as a safeguard against pillage, and to burrow through solid rock in an effort to ensure eternal seclusion. The actual tomb design was relatively uniform, differing only in length and in the number of chambers. There were usually three corridors, one following the other, leading to the inner chambers. High up on the walls of the second corridor were sometimes oblong recesses for the reception of the furniture and effects of the deceased. Alternatively other recesses or chambers were provided at the end of the third corridor for the same purpose. At the end of the third corridor was a door leading to an ante-chamber; the main hall or tomb chamber lay beyond. The roof of the tomb chamber was often supported by pillars and small chambers led off it. In the centre or to the rear was a crypt containing the sarcophagus, usually of red sandstone.

A shaft, sometimes dropping to a depth of over six metres, was a feature of several tombs. Whether this was designed to discourage possible grave-robbers from proceeding further is not sure, though there are positive indications that this was their purpose; for example, the representations on the upper walls of the pit shaft were usually left unfinished with the outer frame of decoration missing, whereas the chambers beyond the shaft were fully decorated. Another theory is that the shaft was for the drainage of rain-water; though rain is not common in Egypt the tomb designers may well have taken precautions against the possibility of seepage.

The concern of the Pharaoh was not with his death, which was

inevitable, but that his journey to the hereafter should be as smooth as possible. There was no apprehension, no fear. Man continued life after death in much the same manner as he had lived on earth, so long as the necessities for his existence were provided, safeguards were taken to prevent his body from decay, and the religious formulae were scrupulously followed.

In the Middle Kingdom the religious formulae by which the dead were to triumph had been recorded both inside and outside the sarcophagus. Gradually the texts were elaborated and scrolls of papyrus were placed in the coffin as well. Enlarged over the years these gradually became uniform and the nucleus of what has become known as the *Book of the Dead*.

The rock-hewn passages and chambers represent stages in the journey to the underworld, which was supposedly divided into twelve hours or caverns. The deceased sailed through them at night in the boat of the Sun God—in fact actually absorbed by him—and representations on the first corridors of the tombs often show the ram-headed Sun God surrounded by his retinue who are standing in a boat and temporarily bringing light to the places he traverses. As they pass from one leg of the journey to another they have to go through massive gates, each guarded by huge serpents. These chapters of the formula are known as the *Book of the Gates*.

The forward corridors were generally devoted to Praises of Ra—hymns to be sung and illustrations of the ceremonies to be performed before the statue of the deceased Pharaoh to imbue it with eternal life. And finally the deceased reached the judgement seat of Osiris, King of the Underworld.

Osiris, the creator of law and agriculture, had once ruled on earth. With his wife and sister Isis at his side he had been a just and much loved ruler who was slain by his jealous brother Set. Set, as the myth goes, conspired against Osiris and at a banquet persuaded him to enter a chest which was then sealed and thrown into the Nile. It was carried down to the sea. The broken-hearted Isis wandered far and wide in tortured misery seeking the body of her loved one. Accompanied on her sad mission by the goddess Nephthys she eventually found the body entangled in a tamarisk bush in the marshes of the delta. She hid the body, but Set, out boar-hunting, found it and cut it into fourteen pieces, scattering it in all directions. Isis continued her mission, collected the pieces (at each spot a monument was erected, which accounts for the widespread myth) and sought the help of the jackal-god Anubis, who became god of embalment, to prepare it for the netherworld.

While he carried out her orders Isis wept and prayed and drew near her dead lord 'making a shadow with her pinions and causing a wind with her wings . . . raising the weary limbs of the silent-hearted (dead), receiving his seed, and bringing forth an heir . . .'¹

Isis, the myth continues, raised her son Horus in the marshes until he was strong enough to avenge his father's death by slaying Set. He then set out to seek his father and raise him from the dead. The risen Osiris, however, could no longer reign in the kingdom on earth and now became king of the underworld where, with Isis still at his side, he ruled below with the same justice as he had exercised above. Horus took over the throne of his father on earth.

On the walls of the tomb chamber, or in the rear corridors, are dramatic representations of the dangers carefully guarded against: enemies withdrawing the breath from the nostrils of the deceased; water bursting into flame as he drinks; foes robbing him of his throne, his organs and, worst of all, his very name, which would thus deprive him forever of his identity.

The tombs in the Valley of the Kings, which are guidebooks to the hereafter, give us an insight into the hopes, expectations and fears of the living Pharaoh. Very soon after his coronation he must have ordered the construction of these usually vast complexes. His artists made initial sketches on the walls. His artisans began to turn out the 403 *Shawabti* (little statues bearing the implements of labour and usually put in big wooden boxes in the tomb to save the Pharaoh from tedious work in the hereafter). Funerary furniture was designed and made. And since secrecy was vital, only the workers from the city at Der el Medina (pages 70/71) toiled on the tombs and only the Pharaoh himself and the high priests knew the actual site.

It is probable that the priests actually possessed an architectural plan or blueprint for the construction of tombs in the valley. Though none has ever been found, one cannot believe that a people capable of placing an obelisk of solid granite upright on a small rectangular base, of planning irrigation canals, and, with their obsession for accuracy, of dividing the year—nearly 4000 years B.C.—into 365 days and thus forming the basis of the calendar we use today, that such a people would hazard a guess about that most vital decision: where to dig a Pharaoh's tomb. Admittedly the first corridor of the tomb of Ramses III actually breaks through into another tomb—that of Amen-mes, one of the pretenders to the throne at the end of the 19th Dynasty—and is consequently diverted and continued to the right. While this might indicate the

¹James Breasted, *The Dawn of Conscience*, Charles Scribner, 1947, p. 100.

absence of any blueprint it may equally be the exception that proves the rule.

What a sad turn of fate that, despite the remoteness of the site, enforced secrecy, complexity of structure and diversion shafts, the tombs were robbed from earliest times! In fact they were probably penetrated soon after they were sealed. Lust for gold, though the main, was not the only reason for their violation. The sacred corridors were also penetrated by enemies of the Pharaoh who wanted to prevent him from continuing his rule in the hereafter. There has been vicious mutilation of some of the mummies. Ramses VI, for example, when unwrapped after having been found hidden in the tomb of Amenhotep II, was discovered to have been literally hacked to pieces.

On the sarcophagi of Seti I and Ramses II are records of a century and a half of persistent effort by the priests to safeguard the royal mummies. Ramses II was first taken from his own tomb to that of his father Seti I. Later he was hidden in the tomb of Queen Inhapi. And finally he was placed in the shaft at Der el Bahri. In their haste to rewrap and hide the mummies, the priests sometimes failed to take the necessary precautions; in the wrappings of Ramses I the body of an old lady was found! This was no isolated instance.

As we pass along the corridors of the violated tombs we wonder to what happy stroke of fortune we owe the preservation of one single tomb left intact. We wonder why the first robbers of Tutenkhamon's tomb—and there are indications that it had been opened and re-sealed—never went back to complete the job. When Ramses VI had his tomb constructed above that of Tutenkhamon the rubble undoubtedly fell and obliterated the latter's, but that was over a century later. Whatever the reason, it is thanks to the preservation of the tomb of Tutenkhamon that we know the story of the lavish splendour, the artistic merit and the able craftsmanship of the 18th Dynasty. And if this was the tomb of Egypt's youngest, and one of its least significant monarchs, what unimaginable treasures must have been stolen from the tombs of Amenhotep the Magnificent, Ramses II who loved size and splendour, Seti I who encouraged an artistic revival, and Ramses III who was known as the 'Wealthiest of Pharaohs'.

TOMB OF TUTENKHAMON (62): Plan 16

Tutenkhamon was the young Pharaoh who succeeded Ikhnaton towards the end of the 18th Dynasty. During his nine year rule he restored Thebes as the capital and started the restoration of the worship of Amon. Apart from this all we know of him is that he met a sudden end. Egyptologists did not seem worried that his tomb had never been found. If there were a tomb, they reasoned, it would probably be poor in content. In any case the notable American archeologist Davis had said that the Valley of the Kings had long since yielded all that it had to yield.

Lord Carnarvon, the wealthy Englishman with a passion for ancient Egypt, thought otherwise. He was convinced not only that there was a tomb but that there was a great possibility of its being intact. Howard Carter, in charge of the team, toiled year after year in the desert of the necropolis, as keen and dedicated as Carnarvon was convinced. For these two, one fruitless year merely built up hope for the next. After six seasons, during which time it was estimated that some 200,000 tons of rubble were moved, Howard Carter was finally forced to accept the fact that his predecessor had probably been right and that the valley had no tomb to yield. It was a depressing decision and one that he could not bring himself to take. For there was one last, very remote possibility: the site immediately beneath the tomb of Ramses VI. It was covered with roughly-constructed workmens' huts. On instructions from Carter his men set about demolishing them.

It was 1922. At the bottom of the steps was the doorway of a tomb. As yet it was too early to tell whose, but the seals seemed intact. Cables were sent to Lord Carnarvon in England while preparations were made for the opening.

Whatever had been expected, or hoped for, there is no doubt that the tomb's actual contents surpassed the wildest dreams. When we gaze at the contents which now lie in Cairo Museum we can almost feel the agony of suspense, exhilaration and utter amazement that must have overwhelmed the first to see the fabulous treasures. The opening was attended by Lord Carnarvon himself, who unhappily never lived to see the full richness of the contents of the tomb, as well as by Lady Evelyn Herbert, Professor Breasted and Dr Alan Gardener.

The tomb proved to be small, but packed to bursting with furniture, emblems, utensils, ornaments, bows, arrows and walking-sticks. Comforts for the Pharaoh in the hereafter included a fly-whisk trimmed with ostrich feathers and a camp-bed folded

Tutenkhamon's gold-plated inner mummy case.



in three parts. There were necklets, pendants, rings and ear-rings, to say nothing of the shrines and sarcophagi. According to Carter, who spent ten years cataloguing the contents, there were 171 objects in the first room alone. When he had made a small opening in the door of the tomb chamber, he had been faced with what appeared to be a wall of solid gold. It turned out to be an enormous gilded shrine within which, one after another, lay no less than three others. Within these were a stone sarcophagus and three mummy coffins. The one holding the Pharaoh's remains was in solid gold and alone weighed 2,488.8 lbs.

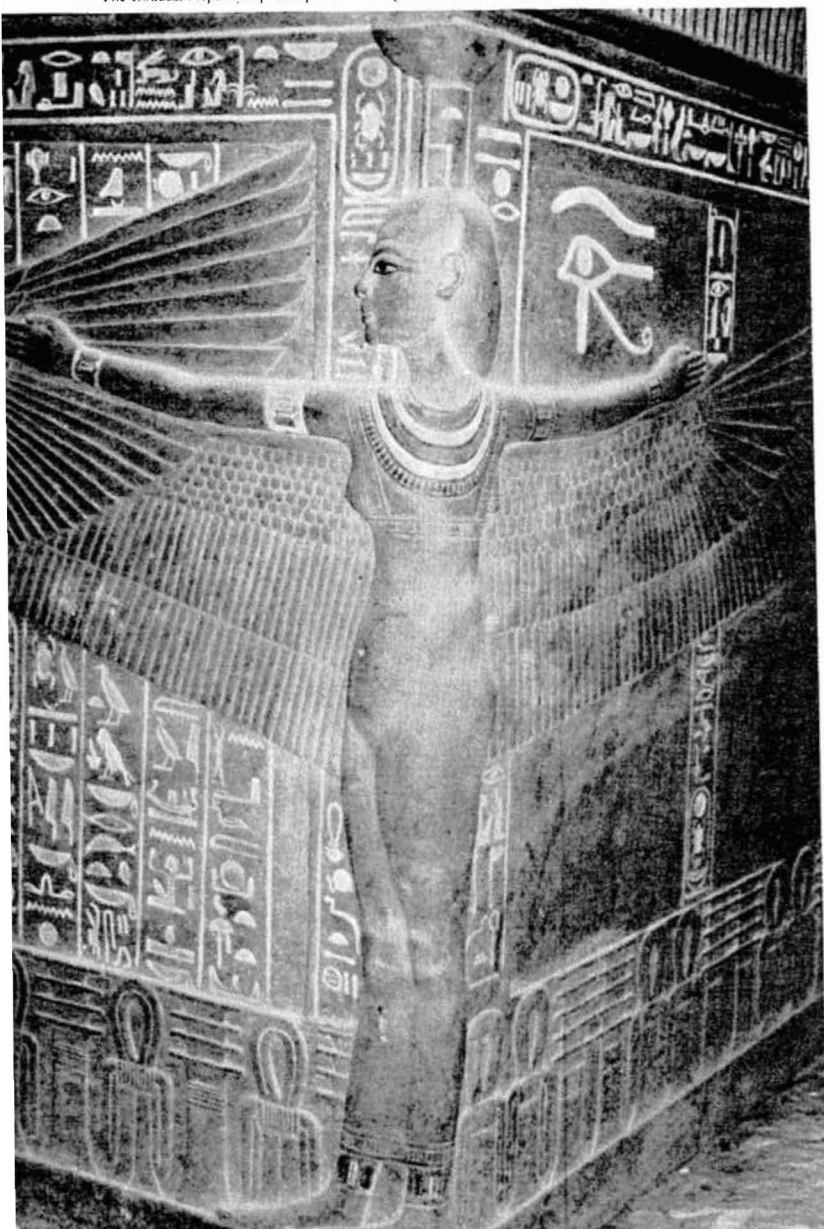
Whilst the world press was focussed on Thebes it was not surprising that one imaginative journalist should attribute the death of Lord Carnarvon to 'The Pharaoh's curse—a sting from a mosquito entombed for centuries'. It added spice to an already fermenting excitement and a growing tourist trade. Vendors and photographers had a heyday in the sacred valley, while forgers were turning out 'antiquities' wholesale.

The mummy was found to be resplendent in gold, with a solid gold mask on the head. There were bracelets, chains, collars, gold beads and necklets of precious and semi-precious stones, engraved *scarabs* and garlands of flowers. Only the inner mummy case, which contained the Pharaoh's mummy, has been left on site. The rest are in the Cairo Museum. But it is as well to bear these treasures in mind as we enter this, the smallest tomb in the Valley of the Kings, for the walls of the first chamber (Plan 16 *A*) which measure a mere eight by four metres, are shockingly bare. Bare, too, are the walls of the small annex (*B*) which contained vessels and containers for oils, baskets of fruit and seed, wine jars and pottery, all decorated in alabaster, ebony, turquoise, gold, lapis-lazuli and ivory.

The only chamber with decorated walls is the burial chamber itself (*C*). The paintings are in almost perfect condition. The religious scenes and inscriptions retain the vivid colour of the day they were painted. There are full-length figures on three of the walls standing beneath a dark band which represents the sky. The wall on the left (*a*) has representations from the Book of the Dead. One is immediately struck by the proportion of the figures, which appear top-heavy. This was of course a characteristic of the Amarna period.

Questions spring to the mind. Why should the walls, apart from the tomb chamber, have been so devoid of decoration when it was believed to be imperative for every stage of the journey to the

The Goddess Nephthys spreads protective wings over Tutankhamon's coffin.



underworld to be faithfully followed? Why were the contents placed in the disorder indicated in the photographs taken just after the opening of the tomb? And how could so vast an array of splendid provisions have been completed in the short span of nine years during which the boy-king ruled? Would a young monarch have been anything but sure that time was in his favour?

The provisions for the hereafter can be easily explained. Tutankhamon was the last in the family line and his tomb was filled not merely with his own but with family treasures. Many of the pieces had been taken from the royal temples of Tel el Amarna. The priceless royal throne in Cairo Museum, for example, shows the young king being anointed by his wife against a background of the life-giving Aton, symbol of his father-in-law's heresy. So even though Tutankhamon had completely renounced the teachings of Ikhnaton he carried his symbols to his grave. Many of the glazed vases and sceptres clearly originated in the other capital. In addition some of the funerary objects were proved to have been made, not for Tutankhamon, but for Semenekh-Ka-Re, Ikhnaton's son-in-law and co-regent. These included one of the larger shrines, some of the mummy ornaments and the miniature canopic coffins which had for some reason been usurped and used in Tutankhamon's tomb.

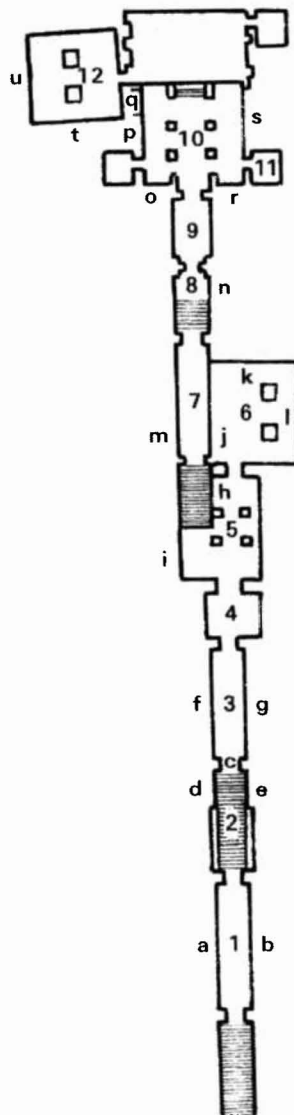
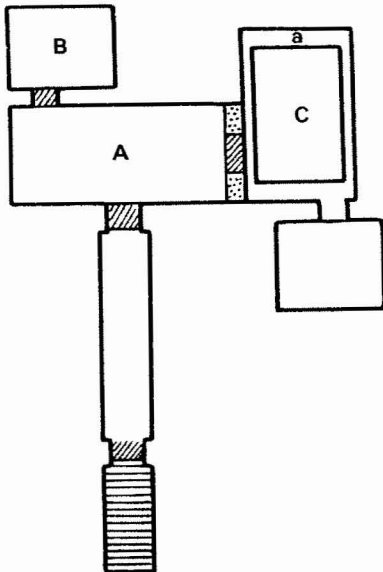
The disorder is undoubtedly indicative of hurry, as is the lack of decoration on the tomb walls. It is clear that the young king met a sudden death and was buried in haste. Murder? Suicide? Until 1969 the mummy revealed no secrets. But the results of an anthropological and skeletal examination of the Pharaoh's mummy, carried out by the Departments of Anatomy of Cairo and Liverpool Universities, are now at hand and it appears that death could have been caused by a blow on the head. Nearly half a century ago Howard Carter had said that there was a 'scab' on the Pharaoh's head. Now Professor Harrison of Liverpool University claims that the unusual thinness of the outer skull of the mummy could have resulted from a haemorrhage beneath the membranes overlying the brain. The X-ray examination has ruled out the theory that Tutankhamon died of tuberculosis.

If the young Pharaoh proves to have been murdered after all, it raises another question. Who was guilty? Was it his tutor Eye, who coveted his young wife and probably married her after Tutankhamon's death? Or was it General Harmhab who had designs on the throne and actually succeeded in seizing it from the blue-bloods at the beginning of the 19th Dynasty?

Plan 17 TOMB OF SETI I

These tombs have not been drawn to the same scale.
Tutenkhamon's tomb is very small; Seti I's is the largest.

Plan 16 TOMB OF TUTENKHAMON



TOMB OF SETI I (17): Plan 17

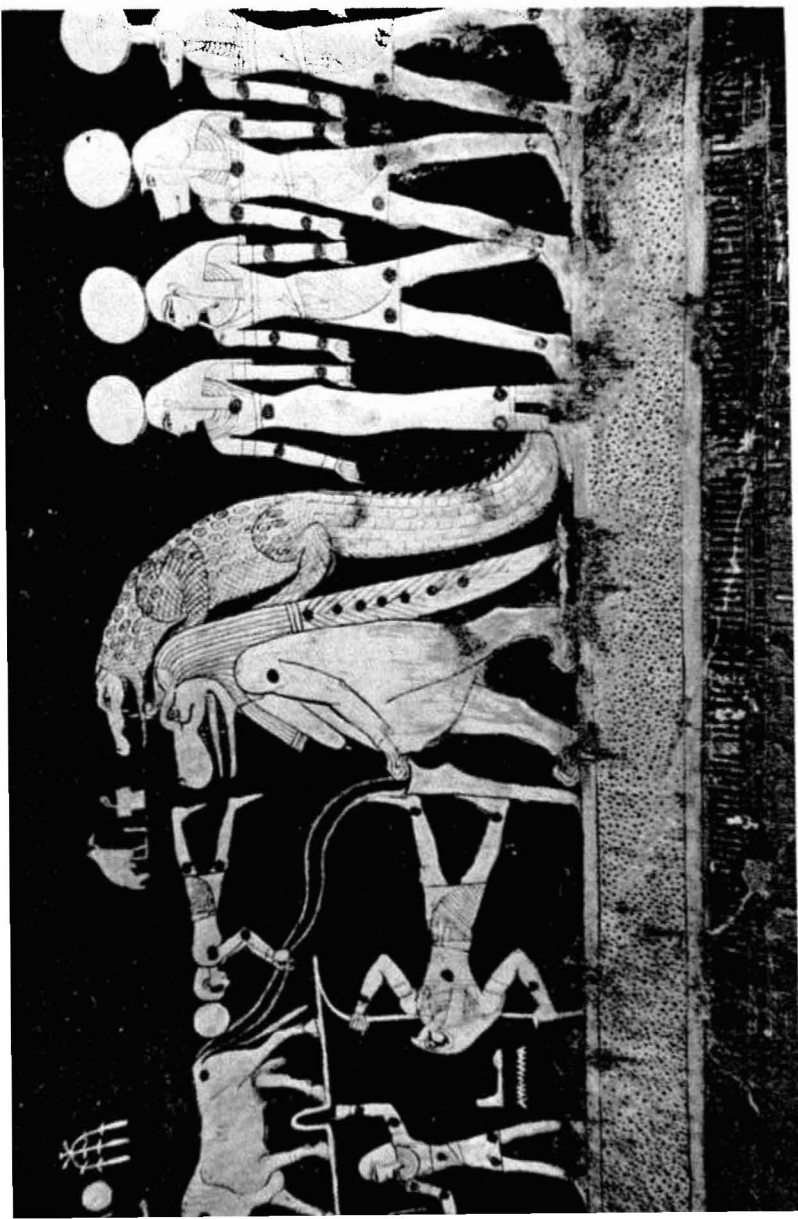
This is a classical tomb that far surpasses all others in the Valley of the Kings both in size and in the artistic execution of the sculptured walls. Every inch of wall space of its entire 100 metre length is covered with representations which were carried out by the finest craftsmen.

Giovanni Belzoni, who discovered the tomb in 1817, was a circus strong man who originally came to Egypt to market an irrigation pump he had designed in England. The project fell through but he arranged the successful transportation of the colossal head of Ramses II from the Ramasseum to the British Museum in London, and by the standards of the day he was forthwith an archeologist! He turned his energies to the Valley of the Kings and made this remarkable find just one year later. When the Turkish officials in Egypt heard of the discovery they straightway made for the tomb, bent on the delightful thought of acquiring priceless treasure. Down the corridors they went, ransacking every corner only to find to their disappointment that the tomb contained no more than an empty sarcophagus.

A steep flight of stairs leads to the entrance of Seti's tomb which is covered with sacred texts along its full length from the highest reaches down to the bed rock. The first corridor (1) is carved in high relief. On the left-hand wall (a) the sun-disc bearing a scarab, and the ram-headed Sun God can be seen between a serpent, a crocodile and two cows' heads. The texts which start on the left are continued to the right (b). The roof is painted with flying vultures.

The second corridor (2), which is staircased, has thirty-seven forms of the Sun God depicted on the upper part of the recesses on both sides. As we descend to the third corridor, Maat, goddess of truth, faces us with outstretched wings above the doorway (c). Isis is represented on the left-hand side (d), and Nephthys on the right (e), and they both kneel on the hieroglyph for 'gold' and place their hands upon a seal ring. Above them, on each side of the corridor, the jackal-god Anubis can be seen. The wall reliefs here have not been completed but we can see the outlines in black, the master's touch in red, and the accuracy with which the relief is carved from the bottom upwards.

Proceeding beneath Maat with her outstretched wings we pass into the third corridor (3), which has dramatic representations of the fifth hour of night from the fifth chapter of the Book of the Dead. Towards the middle of the left-hand wall (f) the sun-boat (damaged) is driven through the netherworld by seven gods and

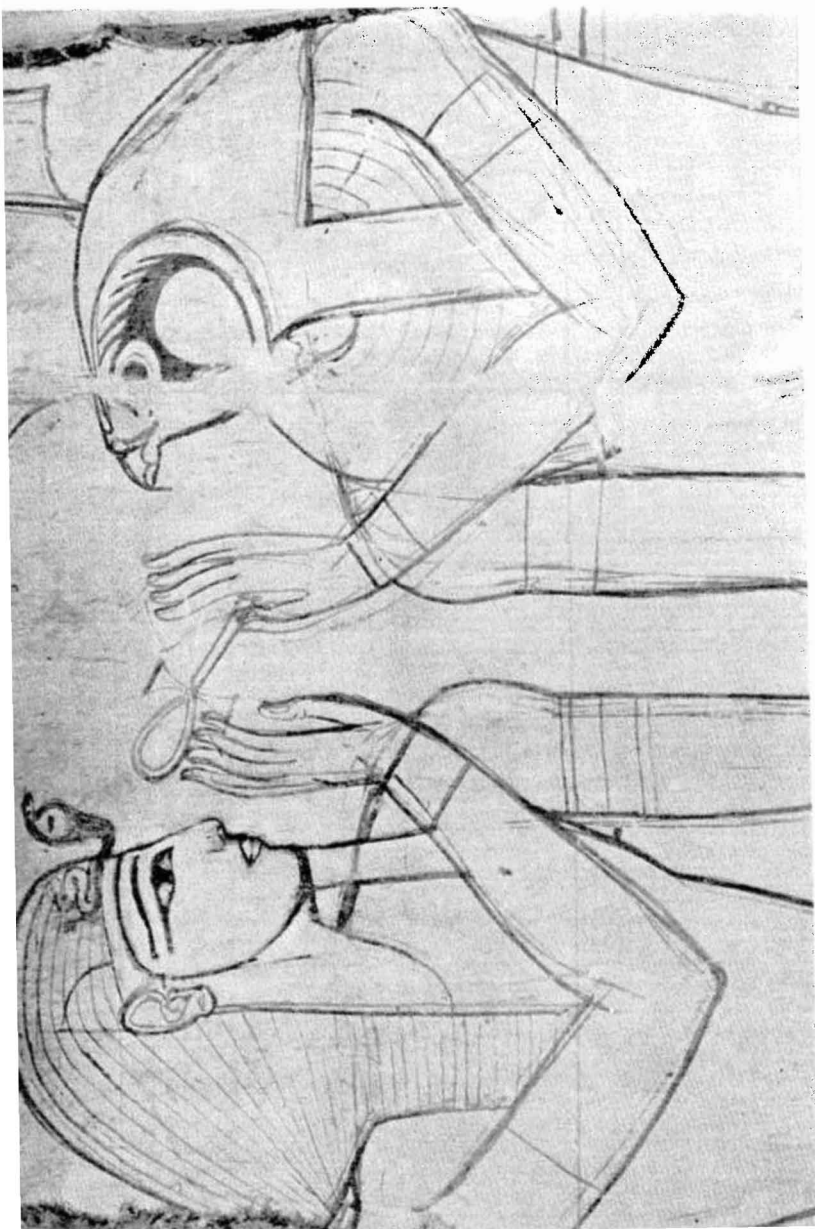


seven goddesses and in front of it march four gods and the goddess Isis. On the right-hand wall (*g*) the Sun God and his retinue are drawn through a land inhabited by demons and monsters (top and bottom rows) and we see a serpent with three heads, wings and human legs. But the Sun God is safe, drawn by Horus and Thoth (middle row) who carry an eye as a protection against evil. The ceiling is blackened from the candles of the early Christians who hid in the tomb.

From the third corridor onwards the quality of the colour on the reliefs is superb. We now come to a small ante-chamber (*4*). The walls, both to left and right, show the Pharaoh between Harmachis and Isis offering wine to Hathor.

We now enter a square chamber with four pillars (*5*). On the pillars themselves the Pharaoh is shown before the various deities: Isis and Nephthys the sister-wife and the sister of Osiris, Hathor the goddess of joy and love who was also the goddess of Dendera to whom the cow was sacred, Selket the goddess to whom the scorpion was sacred, Horus the universal Sun God, and Harsiesis and Harmaches who were special forms of Horus; also of course Anubis, the jackal-god of embalming. The walls, especially those at the sides, have marvellous representations of the sun travelling through the fourth region of the underworld. On the rear wall (*h*) Osiris is enthroned before Hathor while the Pharaoh is led into his presence by the hawk-headed Horus. This is a superb mural with intricate detail and rich colour. Near the corner of the left-hand wall (*i*) the four chief races of men known at the time stand before Horus: these are Egyptians, Asiatics with pointed beards and coloured aprons, four negroes and four Libyans with feathers on their heads and tattooed bodies.

The chamber (*6*), situated to the right and entered via a narrow flight of steps, was never completed. Whether this was because it was discovered that the walls were of inferior material, or as a blind to mislead grave-robbars, is not known, but the sketches on the walls are bold and compelling and show the touch of a master craftsman. The original sketch was done in red. The corrections in black were probably the work of the senior artist, after which the carvers took over. The left-hand wall (*j*) shows the journey during the ninth hour of the underworld: the sacred cow, ram, bird and human head guarding the procession against the fiery serpents. On the rear-wall (*k*) is the tenth hour with the hawk joining the protective deities and the spirits carrying arrows and lances. On the right-hand wall (*l*) is the eleventh hour with the condemned in the



lower row. The enemies of the Sun God are being burned under the supervision of the hawk-headed Horus in strange furnaces, whilst fire-breathing goddesses stand watch with swords.

We retrace our steps to the chamber of pillars (5), to the left of which a stairway, carefully concealed by the builders of the tomb, descends to the fourth corridor (7). To the left of this corridor (*m*) is a figure of the Pharaoh (destroyed) seated at an offering table. Above him hovers a hawk and before him stands a priest.

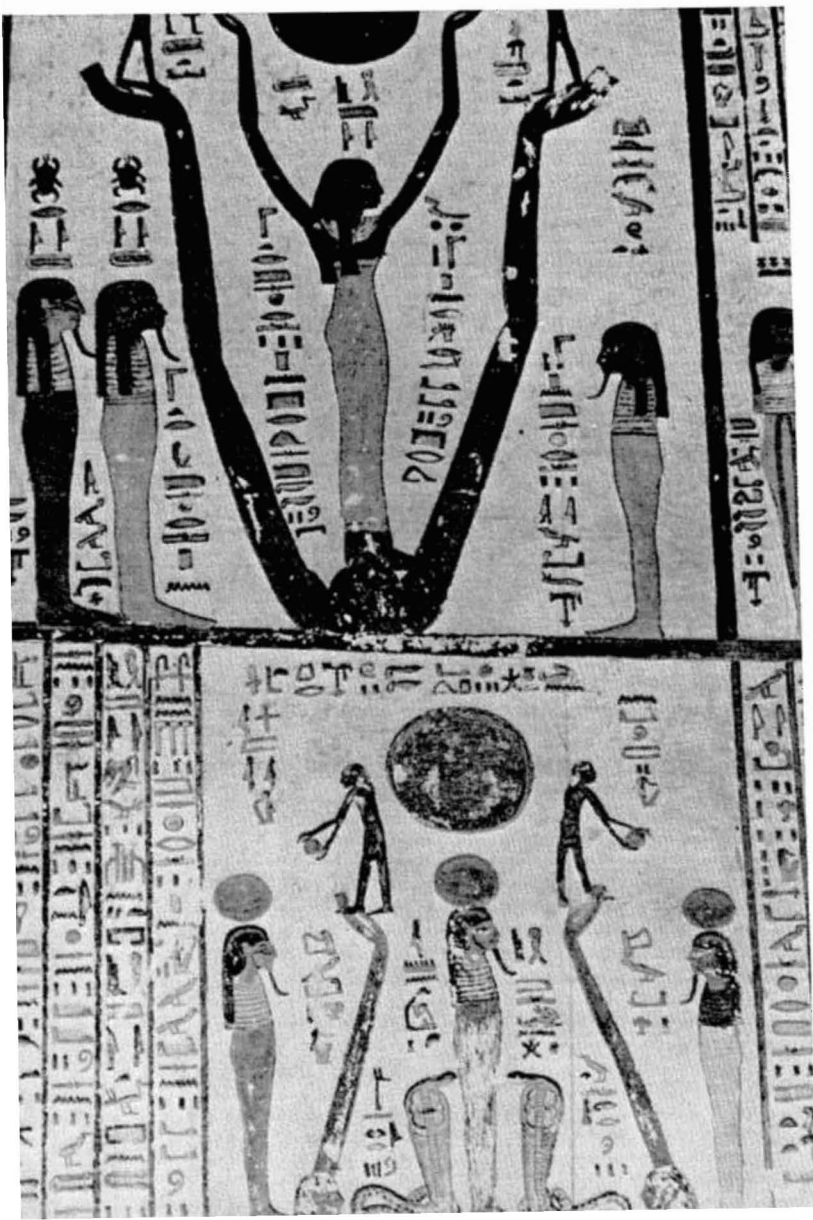
We descend a few more steps into a small corridor (8) which is decorated with texts of the ceremonies performed before the statue of the deceased Pharaoh in order that he may eat and drink in the hereafter. On the right-hand wall (*n*) is a list of offerings.

The ante-chamber (9) is decorated with the gods of the dead including Anubis, Isis, Hathor, Harsiesis and Osiris. Finally we come to a large hall (10). Here a slight incline with steps at the sides takes us to the mummy-shaft, which comprises two portions. The front portion has pillars and the rear portion a vaulted ceiling. It was in the front section that the alabaster sarcophagus of the Pharaoh stood when the tomb was discovered. It was made out of a single piece of alabaster, carved to a thickness of two inches and with the exquisite reliefs filled in with blue paste. This magnificent piece is comparable only to the alabaster vase found in Tutankhamon's tomb which is today in the Cairo Museum. The mummy, which was one of those found at Der el Bahri, is in the same museum. The sarcophagus lies in the Soane Museum in London. When Belzoni, who was commissioned to transport it, took it to the British Museum, the trustees considered the price set too high and the treasure was without a buyer until 1824 when Sir John Soane paid £2,000 for it.

The decorations on the walls of the pillared portion of the hall show the journey through the first region of the underworld on the left entrance-wall (*o*) and through the fourth region of the underworld on the left-hand wall (*p*). In a small recess at the end of this wall (*q*) is a beautiful representation of Anubis performing the opening-of-the-mouth ceremony before Osiris. On the right-hand entrance wall (*r*) and the right-hand wall (*s*) are representations of the journey through the second region of the underworld.

The vaulted ceiling has been painted with astrological figures. From early times, of course, the Egyptians had mapped out the heavens, identified some of the fixed stars and were able to determine the positions of others. This ceiling is unusual in that it has not been painted in the familiar balanced, repetitive form.

A scene from the burial chamber of Seti I's Tomb.



Adjoining the tomb chamber are four side-rooms. The first one on the right (11) has the text of a myth that concerns the rebellion of mankind against the Sun God, their punishment and final rescue. On the rear wall is a magnificent relief of the heavenly cow of the myth supported by Shu, the god of the atmosphere, and bearing on its back two boats of the sun.

The chamber on the left (12) has a shelf decorated with a cornice running round the three main walls. It contains more dramatic representations of the Pharaoh's progress through various provinces, safeguarded by the spells of Isis, the sacred Ibis and the ostrich feather—symbol of justice and truth. Spirits and demons (left-hand wall (1), middle row) greet the procession. The foes of Osiris are beheaded by a lion-headed god (top row), and dwellings of the deceased gods and spirits open their doors as the Sun God approaches (rear wall (12), middle row), showing the dead restored to life, and serpents with heads of genii of the dead upon their backs, or with swords in their hands, rising in unison to annihilate the foes of the Sun God at the end of the journey.

The Pharaoh will overcome. With the help of the Sun God the doors of the hereafter are open to him. He will enter with his valuables and possessions; with the ability to eat and drink; and imbued with life so as to reign again.

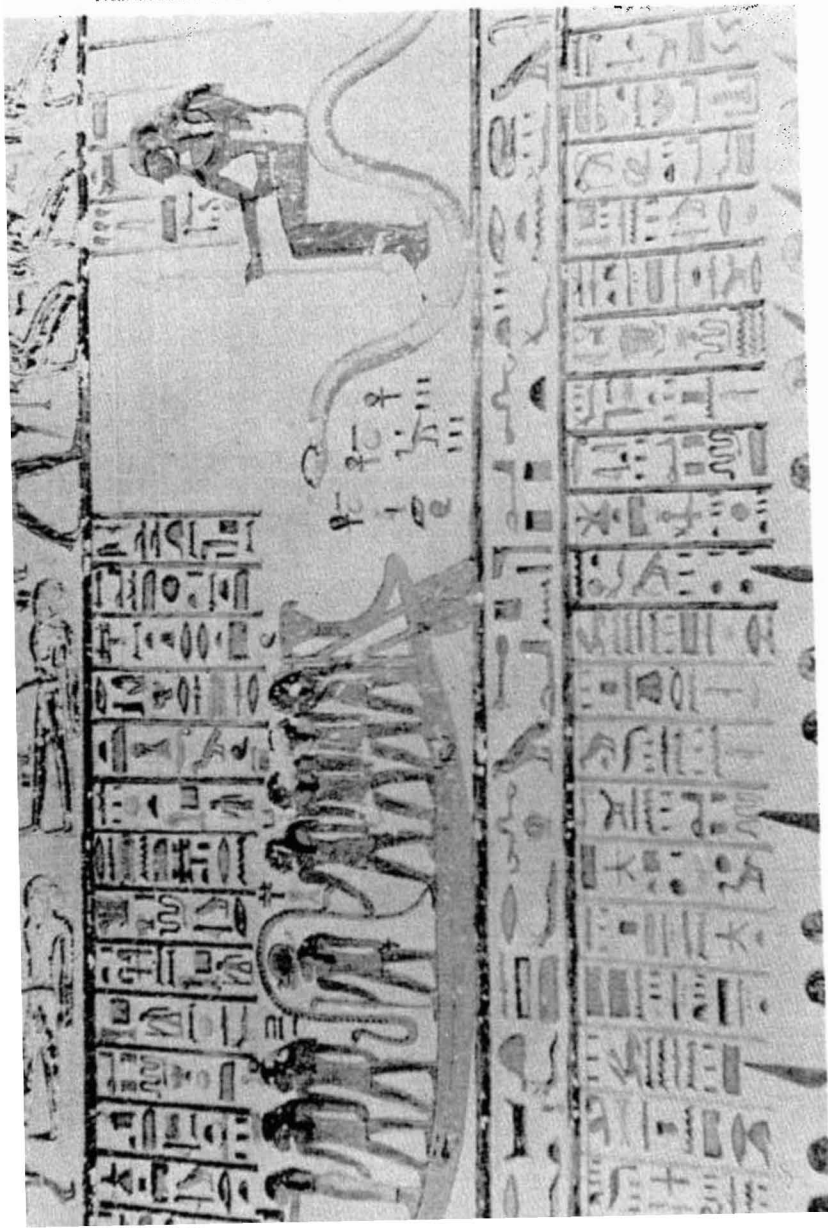
This is his ultimate hope.

Some nine years ago Sheikh Abdel Rasool, a descendant of the Rasool family of Der el Bahri fame, told the Antiquities Department that he considered it his duty to share with them an intelligence that had come down by word of mouth for generations: that beyond the burial chamber in the tomb of Seti I was another chamber.

Although such an extension beyond the burial chamber would be completely irregular, excavations were nevertheless enthusiastically commenced in the hope that if there were such a chamber it would contain some of the funerary furniture of the deceased. A passage soon appeared and continued on a steep decline. The walls bore no decoration. Nearly ninety metres were dug before work had to be abandoned for the more pressing task of salvaging the Temple of Abu Simbel from the rising waters of Lake Nasser.

Work has never been resumed on the passage and it is unlikely that it ever will be. For one thing there is no indication as to how deep it will go; and for another, the disposal of the debris would require some 250 workmen passing with their loads through the

From the Book of the Dead, Tomb of Seti I.



priceless corridors of Seti's tomb. Apart from this the humidity and the lack of oxygen would be major difficulties and already, as a result of the excavations so far carried out, fissures have appeared in the burial chamber.

Since this is the only tomb which has such an extension, might it not be the work of robbers? On the other hand, each side of the sloping corridor has steps, which were typical of the period and certainly not something that robbers would have wasted time on.

TOMB OF AMENHOTEP II (35): Plan 18

This tomb was excavated in 1898. The attention of Loret, the prominent French archeologist, was drawn to it by local *felaheen*. It was a remarkable find. For one thing it was the first tomb ever opened in which the Pharaoh was found where he had been laid. Secondly, there was a windfall of mummies in a sealed-off chamber, including nine of royalty. Thirdly, the burial chamber proved to be one of the most beautiful, certainly the most original, in the entire Valley of the Kings. But more important, the tomb was nearly complete and contained a complete and unspoiled set of texts from the Book of the Dead.

The first corridors are rough and undecorated. They lead to a shaft (now bridged), a false burial chamber (1) created to confuse robbers, and finally to the actual tomb chamber (2). This is supported by six pillars and the sarcophagus of the Pharaoh lay in the crypt-like section at the rear. The mummy was festooned and garlanded and the sandstone sarcophagus was all that the grave-robbers had left. Everything else had been ruthlessly plundered.

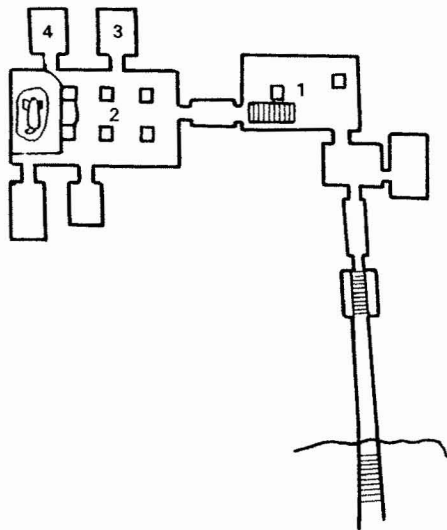
As one enters the tomb chamber one is immediately struck by the originality and beauty of the decorations. The figures on the columns—for the most part depicting Amenhotep and the gods of the underworld—are outlined in black with only his crown, jewellery, belt and the surrounding decorations in colour. The drawing is exquisitely fine and the blue roof is covered with stars. The walls are painted yellow and the traditional religious formulae are so drawn as to give the impression of papyrus texts having been pinned to the walls. There is not too much detail and the use of the pigment is beneficially restrained. As already explained, the Book of the Dead was a development of the magical formulae inscribed on the inside of the coffins of the Middle Kingdom. With the aid of these formulae the deceased would overcome the foes to his eternal triumph in the underworld. Only with the magic inscriptions could he hope to make his heart (conscience) acceptable in the awesome

presence of Osiris when it was weighed against the feather of truth; and only thus could he hope to live securely forever.

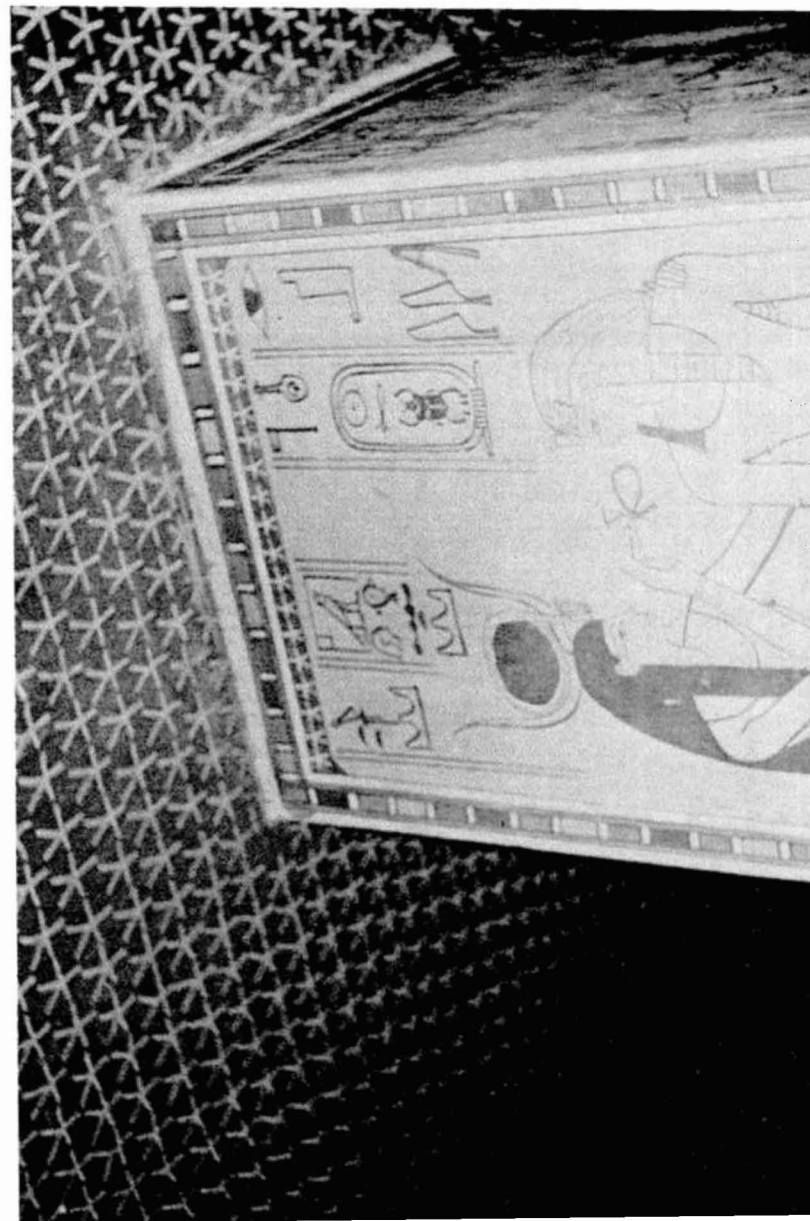
On each side of the chamber are two small rooms. Three mummies lay in the first to the right (3), and in the second (4) were nine royal mummies including Thutmose IV, Amenhotep III, Seti II and Ramses IV, V and VI. All have been taken to Cairo Museum. Not surprisingly this quickly became known as the *Safety Tomb* and this is undoubtedly what the priests had intended it for. When they found that Amenhotep II's tomb had been violated they reasoned that the robbers would not return to its ravaged corridors. In fact they never did. The royal personages remained in peace for centuries.

When Loret excavated the tomb quite a controversy arose as to whether the mummy should be left on site or whether it should be removed with the others to the museum. It was finally agreed that it should remain on site but with an armed guard. Nearly three years later the tomb was rifled when, deliberately or otherwise, the backs of the guards were turned. The mummy of Amenhotep was

TOMB OF AMENHOTEP II Plan 18



Burial Chamber of the Tomb of Amenhotep II.



found on the floor, in a very much poorer condition as a result of delving and prying hands in search of overlooked treasures in the folds of the cloth. There was now no question about it. The mummy of the Pharaoh was placed in Cairo Museum. The marvellous sandstone sarcophagus stands on site.

TOMB OF RAMSES VI (9): Plan 19

This tomb was started by Ramses V and was usurped by his successor. It has three entrance halls, two chambers, a further two corridors, an ante-chamber and the tomb chamber. The wall representations are carried out in low painted relief. The standard of craftsmanship is not high but the tomb chamber itself has one of the most important ceilings in the Valley of the Kings. In fact names and mottoes in Coptic and Greek show that this *Golden Hall* was an attraction from the first century A.D.

The first three corridors carry texts and representations from the Praises of Ra. On both sides of the first corridor, at (a) and (b), the deceased Pharaoh stands before the deities Harachte and Osiris. On the right-hand side of the second corridor (c) is the barge of the Sun God with the twelve hours of night. Towards the end of the left-hand wall (d) is the figure of Osiris before whom is the boat of the Sun God. A pig (representing evil) is being driven away from it by sacred dog-headed apes. We now pass into the third corridor.

On the roof there is a painting of the goddess Nut which extends from the beginning of the corridor (3), through the ante-chamber (4) where her body curves to the right of the roof, and ends in the chamber (5). On the right-hand wall of the third corridor is a superb representation of Osiris under a canopy (e).

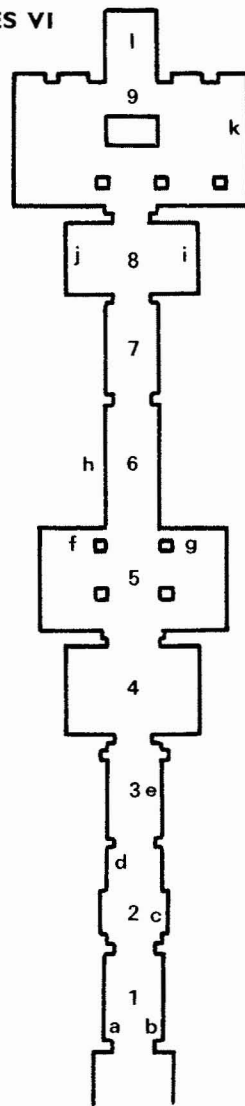
The chamber (5) has four columns and a sloping passage at the rear which is guarded by sacred winged snakes. The columns show the Pharaoh making offerings to the deities. The roof is rich in colour. On the rear walls (f) and (g) are representations of the enthroned Osiris before whom the deceased burns incense. Though the colour is well-preserved, the reliefs are inferior when compared to those in the tomb of Seti I.

The following corridor (6) takes us further along the road to the underworld. On the left-hand side (h) is the journey in the fourth hour with the sacred cow (centre row) and the crocodile in a boat (second row).

The sloping corridor (7) has sacred and protective emblems and religious formulae from the book of 'That which is in the Underworld', and leads to an ante-chamber (8). On the right-hand wall (i)

TOMB OF RAMSES VI

Plan 19



is the deceased Pharaoh with Maat. The left-hand wall (*j*) has texts from the Book of the Dead.

Dark blue and gold predominate in the tomb chamber (*g*). Across the vaulted ceiling the goddess Nut is twice represented along its entire length, in a graceful semi-circle with backs touching. This represents the morning and evening skies. Her elongated body curves to touch the earth with finger and toe, head to the west, loins to the east.

The entire chamber is a complex of appropriate texts from the Book of the Dead. For example, on the right-hand wall (*k*) is a small representation (second row) of the boat of the Sun God, who is represented in the shape of a beetle with a ram's head. The boat is being worshipped by two human-headed birds and the souls of Kheper and Atum (forms of the Sun God). Below this scene (to left and right) are the beheaded condemned and above is a representation of the goddess Nut with upstretched arms.

In the niche at the rear of the tomb chamber (*l*) is the barge of the Sun God held aloft in upstretched arms.

The smashed sarcophagus of the Pharaoh and his molested mummy were left on site by the grave-robbers who violated the tomb.

TOMB OF RAMSES III (11): Plan 20

This tomb is second in size only to that of Seti I and has become known as the *Tomb of the Harp-Player*. Its construction differs from the regular tomb in that five small chambers lead off either side of the first and second corridors, making ten in all. Each is devoted to aspects of the Pharaoh's life. It is also interesting that the first part of the tomb—up to the third room—was built by Setnakht, father of Ramses III, and in places where the paint has fallen off his cartouches are revealed. This is the tomb, it will be remembered, where the third corridor was diverted to the right after its builders had broken into an adjacent tomb by mistake (see page 104).

Although the wall decorations may not be considered of the best artistic quality, their variety and richness are certainly unsurpassed. The entrance door is at the foot of a flight of steps on each side of which are small pillars with bulls' heads. Over the door is a representation of Isis and Nephthys worshipping the sun-disc. Along the first corridor are figures of Maat, goddess of integrity and truth, kneeling and sheltering with her wings the deceased Pharaoh as his body enters the tomb. On the walls are Praises of Ra. The Pharaoh himself can be seen on the left-hand wall before Harmaches (one

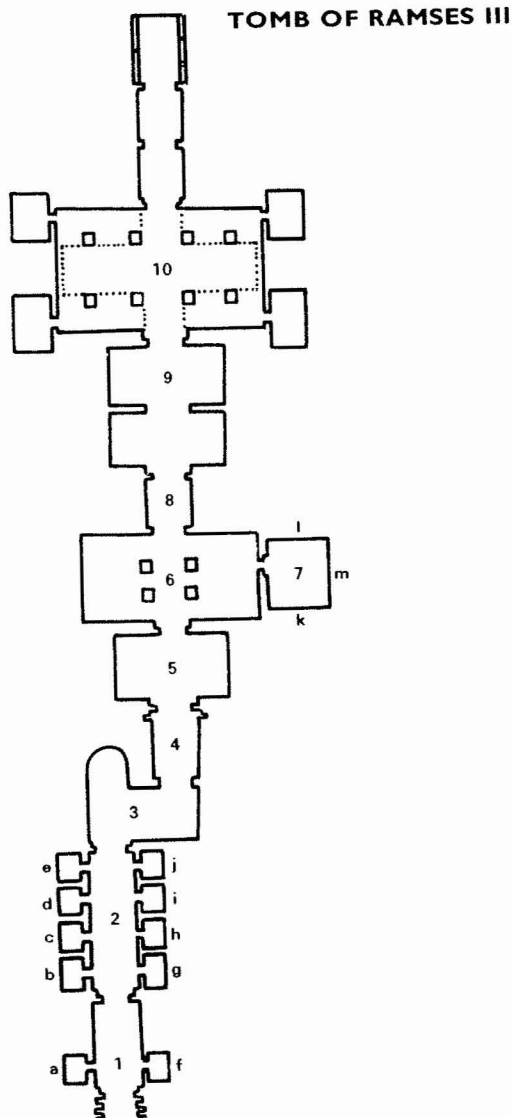
of the forms of the Sun God) followed by the familiar sacred serpent, crocodile and two gazelles' heads.

We now turn to the five small chambers leading off the *left-hand side* of the corridor. The first chamber (*a*) contains various scenes of cooking, slaughtering and baking. The second chamber (*b*) has, on the entrance wall to the left, the kneeling god of the Nile bestowing his gifts to seven gods of fertility which have ears of corn on their heads. On the wall to the right the Nile god is seen before the serpent-headed goddess Napret, five apron-clad royal snakes and two gods of fertility. The third chamber (*c*) is largely decorated with male and female local deities with offerings. In the bottom row are kneeling Nile gods. The fourth chamber (*d*) has representations of the guardian spirit of the deceased on either side of the entrance, each bearing a staff ending in a royal head. The other walls show double rows of rowers, sacred serpents and sacred cattle. The fifth chamber (*e*) contains the representations that gave the tomb its name: on the left wall are two harpists, one before Anhor and the hawk-headed Harmaches, and the other before Shu and Atum. The text on either side of the doorway is the song they sing asking that the blessed Pharaoh might be received.

As already stated, there are five chambers on the *right-hand side* of the corridor. The first (*f*) contains a double row of sailing ships: those in the upper row ready to set sail and those in the lower with sails furled. The second chamber (*g*) is the Pharaoh's armoury. The walls have representations of all the royal weapons and standards. At the top of the left-hand wall are standards with heads of sacred animals. At the top of the right-hand wall are standards with gods' heads. On the rear wall are a multitude of bows, arrows and quivers. The third chamber (*h*) is particularly interesting if we remember that this was a very wealthy Pharaoh, for it contains his treasury. On the walls are representations of furniture and ornaments, utensils and jewellery, elaborate head-rests, cushioned benches and comfortable couches that are attained by steps. The fourth chamber (*i*) has rural scenes. The Pharaoh sails along a canal watching ploughing, sowing and reaping. In the fields are sacred animals. The last chamber on the right-hand side (*j*) is notable for its twelve different forms of Osiris, the god of the underworld.

The fourth corridor is decorated with scenes from the Book of the Dead, and leads to an ante-chamber (*5*) with representations of the Pharaoh in the presence of the gods of the underworld. The sloping passage (*6*) that follows has side galleries supported by four pillars, and a doorway on the right leading to a small chamber (*7*);

Plan 20



here are some fine representations: on the right-hand wall (*k*) the Pharaoh is guided by the deities Thoth and Har-Khentkheti. On the left-hand wall (*l*) he presents the image of truth to Osiris, god of the underworld. On the rear wall (*m*) the Pharaoh stands in the presence of Osiris.

The following corridor (8) is badly damaged, as are the ante-chambers that precede the tomb chamber itself (10). This is a long oblong room with four pillars on each side and an extra chamber at each of the four corners. The actual sarcophagus is now in the Louvre, its lid is in Cambridge, and the Pharaoh's mummy, amongst those taken from the shaft at Der el Bahri, is now in the Cairo Museum.

TOMB OF RAMSES IX (6): Plan 21

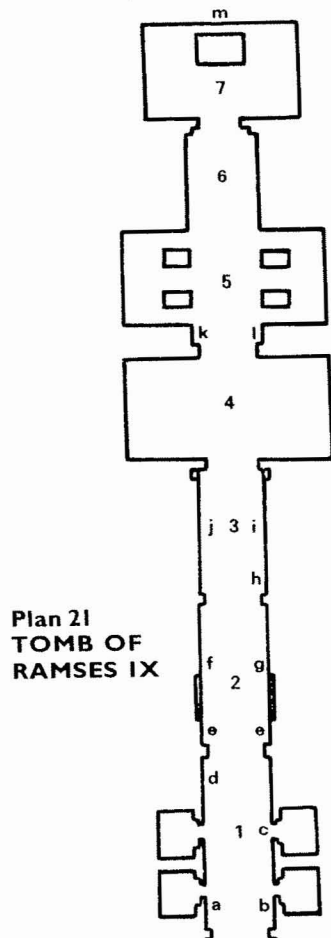
This tomb is constructed on fairly classical lines and comprises three chambers, one following the other in a straight line. It is approached by an inclined plane with steps on either side. Flanking the doorway are representations of the deceased standing before Harmaches and Osiris (*a*), and Amon and a goddess of the dead (*b*). The two pairs of chambers in this part of the corridor have no decorations.

On the right hand wall, over the second chamber on the right (*c*) are demons of the underworld including serpents and ghosts with the heads of bulls and jackals. At this point is the beginning of the text of the sun's journey through the underworld. On the left-hand side of the corridor (*d*) a priest pours forth the symbols for life, wealth, etc. on the deceased Pharaoh, who is dressed like Osiris. The priest wears the side-lock of a royal prince and is probably a son of the deceased.

The roof of the second corridor (2) is decorated with constellations. To both left and right (*e*) serpents rear themselves. Note the recesses for figures of the gods, followed on the left-hand wall (*f*) with the beginning of another text from the Book of the Dead and the deceased Pharaoh before the hawk-headed Sun God. On the opposite wall (*g*) are demons and spirits.

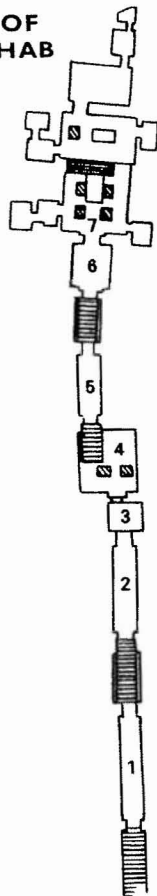
The third corridor (3) is also protected by serpents. On the right-hand wall (*h*) the Pharaoh presents an image of Maat to Ptah, the god of Memphis, beside whom stands the goddess Maat. Note that the transparent cloth of the skirt is cut in low relief thus enabling the foot and front legs of the Pharaoh to appear in high relief. Immediately beyond this representation we see the mummy of the Pharaoh across a mountain, symbolising the resurrection.

The *scarab* and the sun-disc (above) indicate the bringing forth of renewed life on the earth. Towards the middle of this same wall (at *i*) are ritualistic representations including four men spitting out *scarabs* as they bend over backwards, demons standing upon serpents, serpents pierced by arrows and the *scarab* in a boat with two Horus eyes.



Plan 21
TOMB OF
RAMSES IX

Plan 22
TOMB OF
HARMHAB



On the left-hand wall (*j*) are the boats of the Sun God (centre) travelling through the second and third hours of night bearing protective divinities.

We now enter a chamber (*4*). Beyond, at (*k*) and (*l*), are priests with panther skins and side-locks, sacrificing and making offerings before a standard. The next chamber (*5*) is rough and unfinished and slopes downwards to the burial chamber through another corridor (*6*). In the burial chamber (*7*) there are traces (on the floor) of the sarcophagus. On the walls are gods and demons. The goddess Nut, representing the morning and evening skies, is shown across the rough ceiling in two figures. Below are constellations, boats of the stars, etc. On the rear wall (*m*) the child Horus, seated within the winged sun-disc, is symbolic of rebirth after death.

TOMB OF HARMHAB (57): Plan 22

This tomb, which was plundered in antiquity, has an unimpressive entrance with steps through two corridors and is followed by the *well-room* (*3*) and by a hall (*4*) that was completed to resemble the tomb chamber. The stairway on the left-hand side of this hall, though carefully concealed, was nevertheless found by robbers who, following the corridor (*5*), passed through the ante-chamber (*6*) and plundered the tomb chamber (*7*).

This tomb is worth a visit for four reasons. First for the extremely high quality of the reliefs of the well-room (*3*) and the ante-chamber (*6*). Secondly, to see the stages of mural execution in some of the corridors where the work has not been completed and especially in the burial chamber (*7*). Thirdly, because in the six-pillared burial hall the sarcophagus is a fine piece of work in red granite with beautifully carved figures of the various deities along with the religious formulae. At the corners goddesses spread their wings to guard the deceased. Their protection was inadequate, for when the American archeologist Davis excavated the tomb in 1905 the mummy was in such poor condition as even to prevent confirmation of its sex. Fourthly, because on the higher reaches of the tomb chamber are the symbols for north, south, east and west and it is interesting to observe that these were instructions for the workers, who were given appropriate decorations for each.

TOMB OF THUTMOSE III (34): Plan 23

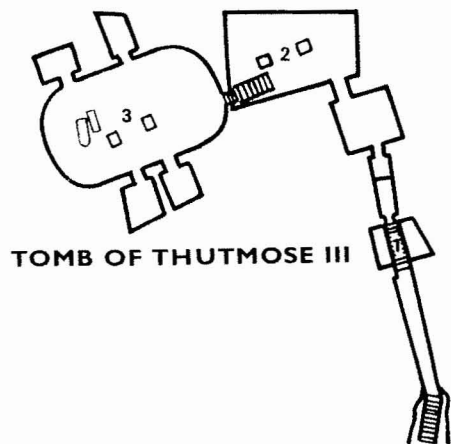
This is the tomb of the world's first empire builder. A steep flight of stairs across a dramatic ravine between sheer mountain faces leads to the remote entrance. It was excavated in the 18th Dynasty

when the Pharaoh's chief aim was concealment. When it became evident that these precautions were useless, the tombs of the 19th Dynasty were grouped together under an armed guard.

The design is simple. After the stairway a sloping corridor descends to a staircase which has broad niches on both sides (1). Beyond this is another corridor leading to a rectangular shaft (crossed by a hand-bridge) and into a chamber (2) which has two undecorated pillars and a ceiling covered with stars. The walls bear the names of 741 different deities.

The tomb chamber (3) is approached by a stairway and is in the form of an oval. The scenes of the underworld are mostly in excellent condition. The representations on the pillars are delightfully simplified black drawings. On the face of the first is a religious inscription and on the left-hand face (from top to bottom) are Thutmose and his queen-mother Isis in a boat, the king being suckled by Isis in the form of a tree and (below) the king being followed by his three wives and the princess Nofretete. On the third face of the pillar are demons. Demons and religious inscriptions adorn the other pillars. The sarcophagus, on an alabaster pedestal, was made of red sandstone and was found to be empty. The Pharaoh's mummy was safely in the Der el Bahri shaft.

Plan 23



CHAPTER 7 THE NECROPOLIS THE VALLEY OF THE QUEENS

BACKGROUND

In this valley by no means all the queens of the New Kingdom were buried. It appears that a special burial ground for the royal consorts was started only in the reign of Ramses I and royal offspring were also buried here. There are signs that previously the queens were laid to rest beside their husbands in the Valley of the Kings, but pillage of the royal tombs has made it extremely difficult for archeologists to confirm this.

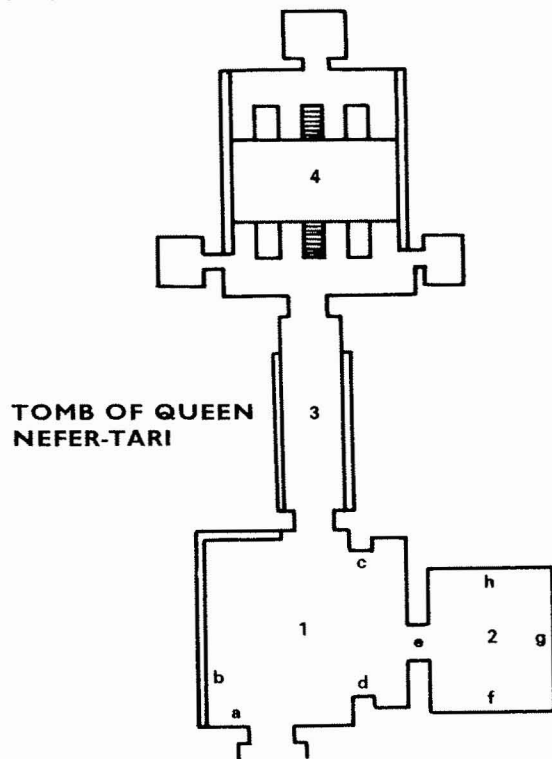
There are over twenty tombs in the Valley of the Queens. Many are unfinished and entirely without decoration, resembling caves rather than sacred tomb chambers. The most impressive is that of the wife of Ramses II, Queen Nefer-tari, his favourite. Although her tomb may only be visited by special permission because of the deterioration of the murals, it will nevertheless be described in order to give a picture of the memorial to a Pharaoh's love. This, and the tomb constructed for the son of Ramses III, Amon-hir-Khopshef, who died too young to pass alone into the divine presence of the gods of the underworld, are the most important.

TOMB OF NEFER-TARI (66): Plan 24

Nefer-tari or 'Beautiful Companion' has a magnificent tomb comprising an entrance hall (1) with a side chamber (2) leading off to the right. A corridor stairway (3) leads to the burial chamber (4) which has four square pillars and, in the centre, a few stairs leading to what was once the site of the sarcophagus, sunk slightly lower than the ground rock. The walls throughout the tomb are elaborately worked in low relief, partly filled with stucco and painted.

The first thing that strikes one on entry into the tomb is the extravagant use of colour and its astounding brilliance. The flesh hues, white robes, black hair, bright friezes give the impression of having been newly painted. And the second thing is the realism with which the queen herself has been painted. She is graceful and sensitive and extremely beautiful. Her form, as she appears before the various deities, is accompanied by only a modest amount of

Plan 24



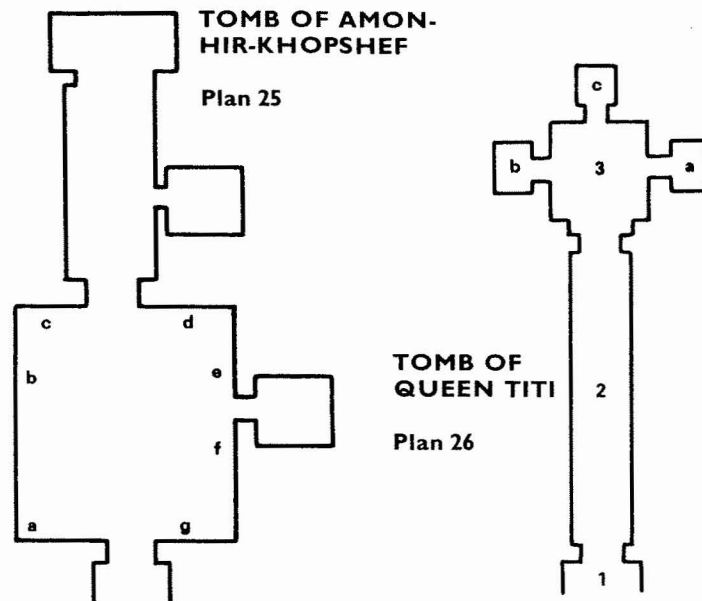
text. This, despite the excessive detail of the drawings, gives the impression of simplification, somewhat as though the presence of one so beautiful spoke for itself.

On the left-hand wall of the first chamber (*a*) is a series of magical formulae with the queen playing. At (*b*) the *ka* worships the rising sun between two lions which symbolise the immediate past and the immediate future. To the right at (*c*) and (*d*) the goddesses Neith and Selket receive the queen. Maat, goddess of truth, is represented at each side of the entrance to the annex (*e*).

In the side chamber (2) on the right-hand wall (*f*) the queen adores seven sacred cows, the bull and four steering oars of the sky. On the facing wall (*g*) she makes offerings to Osiris (on the left) and Atum (on the right). On the left-hand wall (*h*) she stands before the ibis-headed Thoth while Heqt the frog squats before him.

In the staircased corridor (3) Nefer-tari makes offerings to Isis (on the left) and Hathor (on the right) while guardian deities protect and guide her.

The murals of the tomb chamber (4) are not in such perfect condition but represent the deceased queen again with the deities.



As usual, demons guard the gates of the underworld and the queen passes by with the aid of the sacred formulae and emblems. In this tomb the safeguards and warnings against evil, and examples of possible sufferings to those not pure in heart, seem to have been used to the minimum. One is conscious of a path of purity through the underworld, as though the journey of Ramses II's beloved was a mere formality.

TOMB OF AMON-HIR-KHOPSHEF (55): Plan 25

In this charming tomb Ramses III himself leads his son Amon-Hir-Khopshef into the presence of the divine gods of the underworld. The nine-year-old boy wears the side-lock of youth and carries the feather of truth as he obediently follows his father. The reliefs are of fine quality low painted relief, in excellently preserved colour. In fact the murals of this tomb are amongst the finest on the necropolis.

The tomb comprises a large entrance hall with an unfinished annex to the right and the tomb chamber (unfinished).

On the left-hand wall, travelling clockwise, we see the young prince following the Pharaoh Ramses III, who offers incense to Ptah (*a*) and then introduces his son. Afterwards he presents the boy to Duamutef and to Imseti (*b*), who conducts the pair to Isis. Note that Isis (*c*) looks over her shoulder to the advancing Pharaoh. She holds him by the hand.

On the right-hand wall (continuing clockwise) Ramses and his son are conducted to Hathor (*d*), Hapi, Qebhsnewef (*e*) Shu (*f*) and Nephthys (*g*) who puts her hand beneath the chin of the bereaved Pharaoh.

The corridors bear scenes from the Book of the Dead.

There was no mummy of the boy in the sarcophagus but in its place was a foetus of six months' development. Perhaps the mother miscarried due to grief at the loss of the boy. One can only speculate. The foetus is preserved in a small hermetically sealed glass in the tomb.

TOMB OF QUEEN TITI (52): Plan 26

This is not Queen Ti, consort of Amenhotep III and mother of Ikhnaton, but a queen of the Ramesside era. The tomb is damaged but some of the murals still retain startling freshness of colour. The figures of the gods and demons in the tomb chamber defy the years with their brightness.

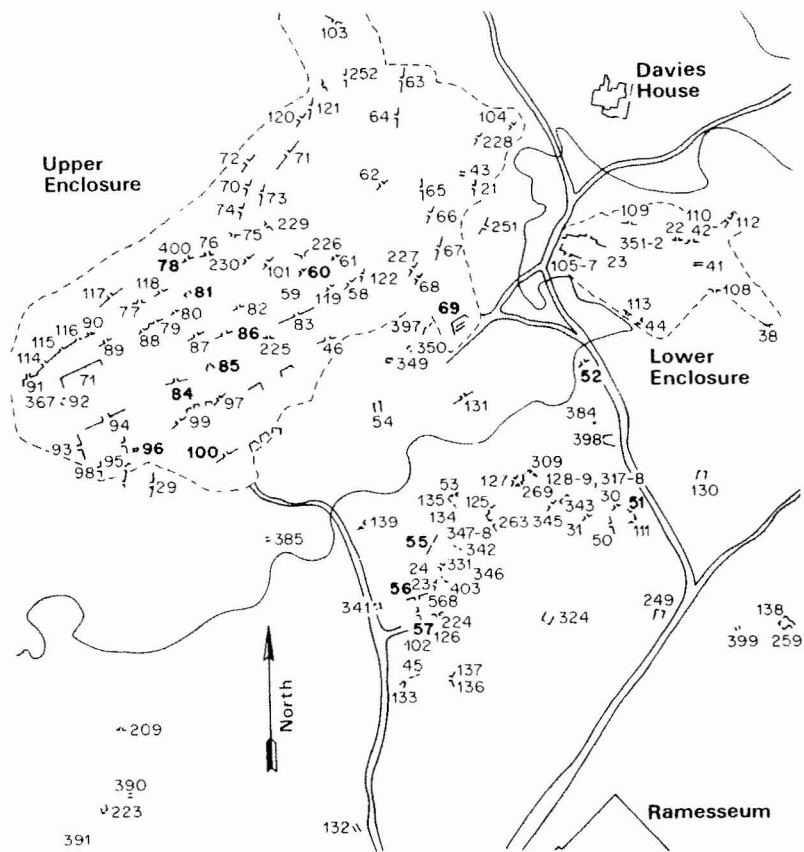
The tomb is simple, comprising an ante-chamber (*1*), a long

passage (*2*) and the tomb chamber (*3*), which is flanked by three small chambers.

On the rear wall of the chamber flanking the tomb chamber to the right (*a*) is a representation of Hathor who appears in the form of a cow in a mountainous landscape. In front there is a sycamore from which Hathor, now represented in human form, pours out Nile water to revive the queen.

The chamber on the opposite side (*b*) contains the mummy shaft. The rear chamber (*c*) shows genii of the dead and various gods seated at offering tables while the queen prays to them (to left and right). On the rear wall Osiris sits enthroned with Neith and Selket before him and Nephthys, Isis and Thoth behind him.

TOMBS OF THE NOBLES SHEIK ABD EL KURNA



CHAPTER 8 THE NECROPOLIS

THE TOMBS OF THE NOBLES

BACKGROUND

The Tombs of the Nobles spread over an area of about two square miles from Dra Abu el Nega in the north to Der el Medina in the south. There are well over three hundred. All belong to the officials who wielded power, to a greater or lesser extent, in the New Kingdom.

Who were these people, these aristocrats of the age? Perhaps their position is best understood by stressing first of all that the Pharaoh of Egypt was no mere figurehead. His position was supreme and he took an active part in all affairs of state. He was concerned with matters ranging from the height the water rose during the inundation of the Nile in any year, to the recruitment of troops, whom he personally led into battle. He participated in public ceremonies and dedications, supervised the planning and construction of an edifice or a state thoroughfare and even had the final say in the judgement of a petty crime. It can be readily appreciated therefore that this was far too much for a single pair of hands and the Pharaoh's vizier took a share of the responsibility. Along with the chief treasurer, he headed the main government departments. The vizier provided the liaison between the departmental heads and the Pharaoh, just as the departmental heads provided the liaison between the workers and the vizier. In Thebes all the affairs of the state capital filtered through the hands of the vizier before coming to the attention of the Pharaoh, including the annual taxation from officials and recording of tributes from conquered lands.

The viziers held a powerful position and the growth of this power can be traced in their tombs from the days of Thutmose III, when the monarch could afford to be liberal with his loyal and trusted subordinates, giving them gifts and honours in recognition of their services, to the era following Ikhnaton's breakaway government when the vizier became the power behind the throne and, taking advantage of a weakening line of monarchs, ultimately gained the supreme position for himself.

These then are the tombs of the grand vizier and of those under

his control: the army general, the superintendent of granaries, the overseer of gardens, the scribe of the fields, etc. The majority of tombs were uniform and simple, designed in two parts. There was a wide open court leading to a hall which was sometimes supported by pillars or columns. Directly centre-back of this hall was a long corridor leading to the offering shrine which had niches for the statues of the relatives of the deceased. The walls, due to the poor quality limestone rock, were covered with a layer of clay and then a coat of whitewash. These were painted. There are sculptured reliefs on only a few. The walls of the main hall usually bore prayers for the deceased to the right and a record of his career to the left. The back corridor usually carried the various funerary rites.

The tombs of the nobles differed from those of the Pharaoh in one important respect. Whereas the royal tombs were only burial places, the tombs of the nobles were funerary rooms and burial places combined. The Pharaoh was divine and joy and plenty were automatically assured to him in the hereafter, while a nobleman depicted on the walls of his tomb every aspect of his experience on earth that he wanted repeated in the hereafter. Naturally he chose the most pleasant memories: the perfect harvest, the perfect feast, the perfect catch on the hook and the perfect fowl brought down with an arrow. The happiest hours of his life were captured for the hereafter, the greatest joys and naturally the most praiseworthy honours bestowed on him for his administrative excellence.

These tombs shed a flood of light on the life and times. They are valuable chapters in ancient history. Just as the Sakkara *mastabas* tell us about life in the Old Kingdom and the rock-hewn tombs of Beni Hassan give an insight into the Middle Kingdom, it is the tombs of the nobles that tell us most about the New Kingdom. We see how the people lived, worked, built, fished, speared. We see them enjoying a social function and grieving at a funeral. We see the impassive faces of officials at a public ceremony and the light-hearted gaiety of a group of dancers. In fact here is a new type of art.

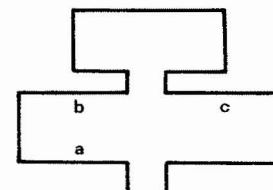
Egyptian art, as we have seen, was both religious and idealised, conforming to a strict pattern in the portrayal of the Pharaoh, the deities, battles and festivities. The side-view face was considered more typical of the individual than front-view, whilst front-view eyes were necessary for expression. A side-view of the arms necessarily meant concealing one of them, therefore square shoulders were necessary. Groups of people were shown as parallel outlines behind the front figure. These traditions were never questioned by

the state artists and they continued the repetitive positions and positioning from generation to generation. Movement was unknown.

In the tombs of the nobles we come across a severe break with these traditions. All the paintings are characterised by naturalism. First of all, in place of the frieze, each wall is surrounded by a decorative border and within each frame is a picture, complete in itself. The outer figures face inwards, movements and actions are varied. There is balance, perspective and, surprisingly, even front-view faces and side-view shoulders. The most delightful drawings are such realistic portrayals as a thirsty man and a naughty child. The natural wit and spontaneity of the artist has at last been released. While national and mortuary temples were normally filled with stylized, grand, heroic and repetitive themes, the walls of the tombs of the nobles were covered with a rich and exciting catalogue of the lives of men, each of whom was a pivot of at least one administrative unit of his time—and not, as sometimes claimed, by cheap substitutes for wall relief.

TOMB OF NAKHT

Plan 27



SHEIKH ABD EL KURNA

Tomb of Nakht (52): Plan 27

This is the simple tomb of the scribe of the granaries under Thutmose IV. It comprises two chambers and only the first is decorated. But in this single room are such detailed activities, executed with such infinite charm and in such a good state of repair that the tomb of Nakht will always rank as one of the finest. The more detailed the earthly activities depicted in the tomb, the easier for them to be repeated in the hereafter; that much is clear. But this tomb has, in addition, extraordinary and remarkable irrelevances that both surprise and charm.

We will turn to the left after we enter the doorway. On the first wall (a) is a series of agricultural scenes including ploughing, digging, sowing, etc. In the upper row the deceased superintends three stages of the harvest: the measuring and winnowing of the grain, the reaping and pressing of the grain into baskets—with a

charming drawing of a man leaping in the air so that the weight of his body might press the grain tightly—and, in the lower row, the labourers being organised by the deceased for ploughing in two teams. Note that the ploughman has ragged hair, the ox is piebald and that, in the midst of the strenuous work one of the workers takes a moment's respite to drink from a wineskin on a tree.

On the rear left-hand wall (*b*) there is a delightful scene showing the deceased and his wife (in the lower row) being brought flowers and geese by their son whilst three women play music to them. These female musicians are sensitively painted in perfect detail. The graceful nude lute-player dances to the accompaniment of a no less graceful flautist and harpist. The body of the one girl is given front-view treatment while her head is turned to speak to her colleague. Above is a blind harpist playing to guests and attended by an audience of women seated on the ground, who are apparently more interested in local gossip than in watching the dancers, and a naked young girl leaning to put perfume before the nostrils of three women. Below Nakht's chair is a bristling cat who has just stolen a feast.

On the right-hand rear wall (*c*) the deceased is seated with his wife in an arbour (lower row), while flowers, poultry, grapes and fish are brought to them by their servants. Servants were of course a regular feature in the homes of Egypt's noblemen. Each had a specific chore: cleaning the bed-chamber, washing the laundry, acting as nanny.

On this same wall (*c*) birds are being caught in nets and plucked. The filled net is a complex of wings and colours. Grapes are being picked and turned into wine (lower rows) and in the upper row the deceased enjoys his hobbies. He is spearing fish and shooting fowl. The fishing scene was never completed. Though the fish themselves are drawn, Nakht has no spear in hand. His wife tenderly holds an injured bird in her hand. His little daughter holds his leg to prevent him from losing balance.

It is interesting to note that, in contrast to the twelve dramatic zones of the underworld traversed by the deceased Pharaohs in their tombs in the Valley of the Kings, the deceased noblemen had simple intercourse with the gods. On each side of the entrance doorway Nakht, followed by his wife and three rows of servants, makes offerings to Amon, whose name was obliterated by Ikhnaton whenever it occurred.

In the second chamber, in a shaft descending to the mummy chamber, was found a small and exquisite statue of Nakht in a

kneeling position and holding an inscribed stele. This little masterpiece is now lying on the floor of the Irish Sea. The s.s. *Arabic* on which it was being transported was sunk in World War I.

Nakht the man has emerged from the paintings in his tomb. We know about his official career with its emphasis on organisation, efficiency and production, his family life with its show of harmony and plenty, his entertainments with their air of light-hearted gaiety and the pastimes that gave him most pleasure.

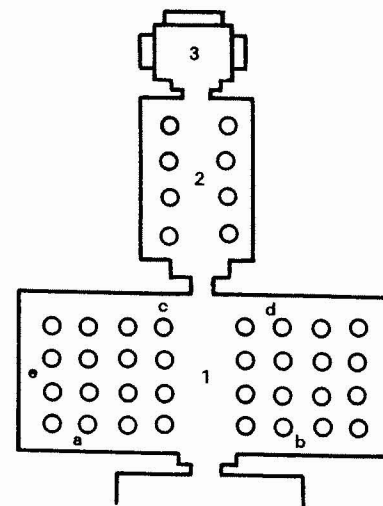
Tomb of Ramose (55): Plan 28

This tomb belongs to the vizier in the reigns of Amenhotep III and Amenhotep IV (later Ikhnaton). It comprises a main hall with thirty-two rather squat papyrus columns (*1*), an inner hall (*2*) containing eight clustered columns of smaller dimension (all destroyed) and the shrine (*3*).

Ramose was one of the earliest converts to the sun-worship and his tomb is therefore of historical significance as one of the few standing monuments in Thebes of the period between the two faiths. It is moreover of artistic significance since it gives a unique opportunity to see conventional relief representations alongside

Plan 28

TOMB OF RAMOSE



the new realism which has become known as the *Amarna period*.

Before we describe the tomb of Ramose a word should be said about Ikhnaton's sun-worship and the art it heralded. The movement was not the isolated act of a rebellious Pharaoh who established a new capital in Tel el Amarna with a set of original ideas and a new outlook. The sun-worship of Ikhnaton was introduced in Thebes over a number of years. The formation of a new capital, rendering Amon no more than a local deity, was really only the final step in a continuing process.

Light is still being shed on the transition period from one worship to another. There is considerable evidence to support the theory that Amenhotep III and his son shared a co-regency for many years at Thebes, and that, while the father was too disabled by ill-health and his son too young for the responsibility, Queen Tiy laid the foundations for the new thought that her son was to bring to fruition. Among the first steps taken were the 'enlightenment' of certain Theban noblemen to the 'truth of monotheism', and a breakaway from the traditional forms of art. The tomb of Ramose dates from this period. It was started in the traditional style, continued in the new and left unfinished when Ramose followed his master to Tel el Amarna.

On both the left and right eastern walls of the main chamber, the murals are in unpainted, stylized relief. This was the conventional mural form typical of Amenhotep III's last years when his son may have been co-regent. On the southern half (*a*) Ramose the deceased vizier sits with his relatives. The men and women of his household are depicted in the traditional manner with regular faces, clothes and elaborate wigs, the details of which were carried out with faultless precision; the only paintwork is on the eyes. On the northern wall (*b*) are scenes of worship, offerings and religious ceremonies.

The representation that most fully shows the stylized, unemotional, traditional treatment of the mural is that on the left-hand rear wall (*c*) by the central doorway. It is a portrayal of Amenhotep IV, as he was then still called, seated below a canopy with Maat. Ramose himself is twice represented before the throne. This scene probably dates from the period of the building of the first temple to the sun at Thebes, a time when Amon was not yet openly challenged but the worship of Aton was nevertheless taking root.

However on the right-hand rear wall (*d*) we see a quite new mood. Now the young Pharaoh, who changed his name to Ikhnaton only after he set up the new capital, stands with his royal consort

Nefretiti on a balcony, while Ramose, depicted in Amarna style and attitude, is being decorated with chains. Though it is still in relief, one can easily recognise the new realism, especially in the portrayal of the Pharaoh and his wife. Compared with the divine incarnation of Amon at (*c*), here at (*d*) we see the Pharaoh with belly extended in unflattering truth. Above is the life-giving sun with fourteen rays. Four of them hold symbols of life and happiness. Two support his outstretched arm. Another offers the symbol of life to the nostrils of the queen. Behind is the royal bodyguard. This mural probably dates from the period just before the departure from Thebes and already the thick loins of the *Amarna period* are apparent, though some of the innovations, such as the higher relief of the attendants in comparison with the rest of the sculpture, has not yet matured. It is a preview of art movement taking shape.

Let us ponder a moment about this so-called 'freedom of artistic expression' under Ikhnaton. It does not imply individualism, since the state artists worked in teams on approved themes inherited from the early dynasties. They were now freed from this traditionalism, which was encouraged by the priesthood, to do free poses encouraged by the Pharaoh. A swinging walk, relaxed comfort, tender relationships, predominate in the new art.

One theory is that the Amarna period was one of artistic degeneration. But degeneration does not take place overnight, and here in the tomb of Ramose the two art forms coexist. One may compare the stiff, unpainted, precise relief work of the earlier period with the first stages of the new realism. It is a unique opportunity to see the Pharaoh on one wall in perfect, divine immobility and, on the other, as the relaxed and physically imperfect man.

On the upper part of the left-hand wall (*e*) is a peculiar juxtaposition of old and new in the group of mourners, one of the most expressive and delightful drawings to be found in any tomb. Grief comes down the centuries in a heart-rending funerary convoy. The men carry boxes covered with cooling foliage, a jar of water and flowers. A group of grieving women turn towards the funeral bier, fling their arms about and throw dust in their hair, tears streaming down their cheeks. One woman is supported by a sympathetic attendant. One is so young as to be unclothed. Most of the figures are individual, expressing varied movements and degrees of grief, and are even of different sizes. But the group of five mourners at the centre of the group of women are shown as a series of parallel

lines behind the front figure. Traditions are not easily broken! Further along the wall women beat their breasts and thighs in grief or squat to gather dust to scatter on their heads.

Another theory about the representations of the Amarna period is that the young Pharaoh reverted to the archaic forms of art that he held so dear. He believed that Amon was but a usurper of the true sun-worship of Ra at Heliopolis and accordingly the proportions of pre-dynastic times were recaptured. The art he encouraged, in the words of Arthur Weigall, was 'a kind of renaissance—a return to the classical period of archaic days.'¹

In the doorway leading to the second, unfinished, chamber Ramose appears standing (on the left-hand side) and praying (on the right).

Tomb of Khaemhet (57): Plan 29

This is the tomb of the overseer of the granaries of Upper and Lower Egypt late in the reign of Amenhotep III, a time when art and architecture were flourishing. It was also a time when religious conceptions were undergoing a gradual change towards the worship of a single deity, the sun. The murals are in low relief and are carried out in precise and sensitive detail. This is particularly apparent in the treatment of Khaemhet's wig, with his own hair showing beneath.

The tomb comprises a large traverse chamber (1) with a niche on the left-hand side containing badly damaged statues of the deceased and the royal scribe Imhotep, a corridor (2) with scenes relating to the underworld and a second traverse chamber (3) containing three niches bearing statues of Khaemhet and his relatives. These too are in poor condition.

On the left-hand entrance wall of the first chamber at (a) is a remarkable representation of Renenet, the snake-headed goddess of the granaries. She is seated in a shrine and offerings are made to her by three finely sculpted male figures. The child she nurses is symbolic of the new harvest. Further along the wall (b) is the bustling port of Thebes. The masts of many corn-laden vessels, the steering oars tipped with the head of the Pharaoh, the mastheads, the rigging—all are depicted in meticulous detail.

On the rear left-hand wall (c) is a scene showing servants of the vizier bringing in cattle. At (d) are damaged figures of the Pharaoh and his vizier. At the foot of the royal canopy are nine captive tribes whilst between the lion-legs of the throne are two captives: Negro and Asian.

¹ *The Life and Times of Ikhnaton*, Thornton Butterworth, 1933, page 63.

On the right-hand rear wall (e) the enthroned Pharaoh (defaced) receives homage from Khaemhet and his officials. Further along (f) Khaemhet is being decorated by the Pharaoh; according to the inscription he was so honoured in the thirteenth year of the reign of Amenhotep III.

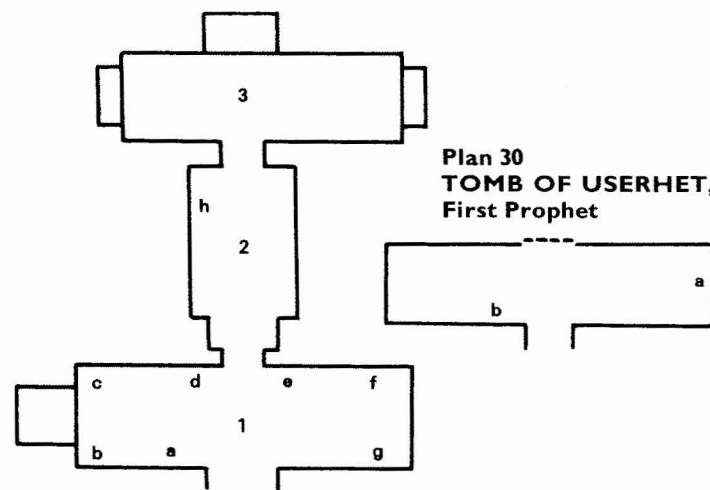
On the right-hand entrance wall (g) are a set of agricultural scenes including measuring the land, sowing and reaping. Khaemhet's chariot is drawn up near the fields and while a sleepy driver awaits the return of his master the horses take advantage of the break to graze.

In the corridor, on the left-hand side at (h), is a fine representation of Osiris enthroned with Hathor standing behind him.

Tomb of Userhet, First Prophet (51): Plan 30

Although it is not in too good a state of repair, this tomb, belonging to the First Prophet of the Royal Ka of Thutmose I in the reign of Seti I, contains a symbolic scene of such high order of artistic execution that it should on no account be missed.

Plan 29 TOMB OF KHAEMHET



Plan 30
TOMB OF USERHET,
First Prophet

It is on the right-hand wall of the narrow traverse chamber (a) and shows Userhet and his wife and sister sitting beneath a fig-laden tree drinking the Water of Life presented to them by a tree-goddess who rises out of the lake before them. As the liquid is poured from a golden vessel into the cups, the three seated figures are offered figs and grapes, bread and honeycomb. The T-shaped lake between Userhet and the tree-goddess shows the souls of Userhet and his wife as human-headed birds drinking the Water of Life from their cupped hands. The symbolic purpose of the mural is almost obliterated by the imaginative and realistic treatment. It must have been a truly magnificent representation. Above the seated figures wagtails flit among the branches of the fruit-laden tree and above the two women are the human-headed birds which represent their souls or *bas*.

On the left-hand entrance wall (b) Userhet's heart is being weighed, not against the ostrich feather of truth, but this time against the figure of a man.

The inner corridor is in ruin.

Tomb of Userhet, Royal Scribe (56): Plan 31

This is the tomb of the royal scribe in the reign of Amenhotep II. His name was also Userhet and the condition of his tomb is extremely good.

Rural scenes decorate the left-hand entrance wall (a). They include the branding of cattle and the collection of grain. On the rear left-hand wall (b) is a feasting scene where unfortunately all the figures of the women were destroyed by a Christian monk who made his home in the tomb. On the right-hand rear wall (c) men bring bags of gold-dust to be counted by supervisors (upper row), and in the lower row is a charming scene of men queuing beneath the trees to have their heads cut and shaved. The barber himself is busily at work on two clients. On the same wall (d) bakers are making bread (middle row) and Userhet's guests are seated (lower row). Towards the end of the wall (e) Userhet makes offerings to his Pharaoh, who wears a colourful red tunic with yellow spots.

The most notable scene in this tomb is on the left-hand wall of the inner corridor (f). It is a hunting scene in which the charioted nobleman shoots at fleeing gazelles, jackals, hares and other animals. Userhet has the reins tied around his waist and the string of his bow taut and ready to shoot. The movement among the fleeing animals is beautiful and rhythmic. Further along the wall (g) are scenes of fishing, fowling, and viticulture.

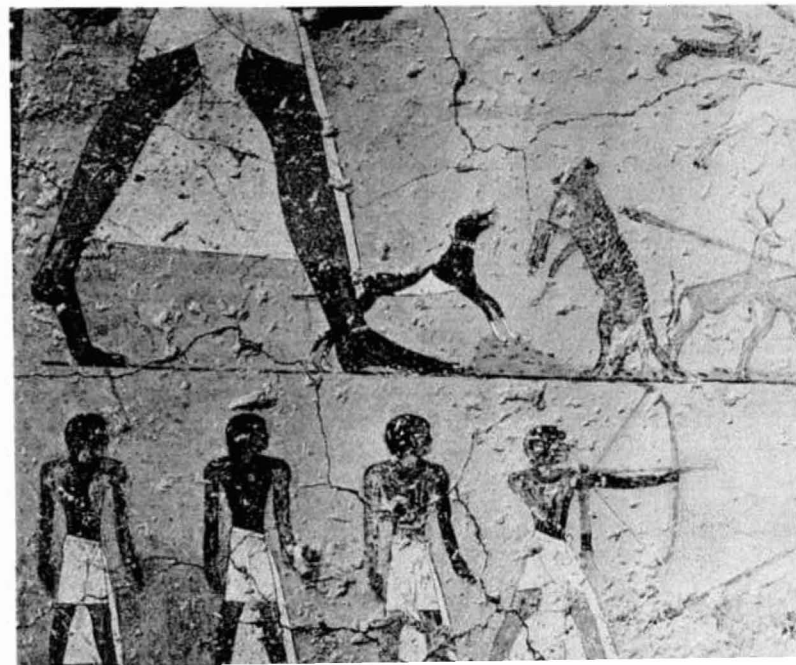
The right-hand wall has funerary scenes with the weeping women (h) beautifully depicted in their sorrow.

Tomb of Rekhmire (100): Plan 32

Rekhmire was vizier under Thutmose III and his son Amenhotep II. The tomb follows the regular style of the 18th Dynasty nobles' tombs, comprising a narrow, oblong first chamber and a long corridor opposite the entrance. But this corridor rapidly gains in height to the rear of the tomb and runs into the rock. It was inhabited by a *felaheen* family for many years and the wall decorations have suffered at their hands. The tomb is a memorial to personal greatness and a revelation on law, taxation and numerous industries. Professor Breasted described it as 'the most important private monument of the Empire'.

Rekhmire was an outstanding vizier who was entrusted with a great many duties. There was nothing, he wrote of himself in an inscription, of which he was ignorant in heaven, on earth or in any part of the underworld. One of the most important scenes in the tomb is that on the left-hand wall of the first chamber near the

Hunting scene from the Tomb of Userhet.



corner (*a*). It shows the interior of a court of law in which tax evaders are brought to justice by the grand vizier himself. The prisoners are led up the central aisle, witnesses wait outside and at the foot of the judgement seat are four mats with rolled papyri. These are proof that written law existed in 1500 B.C. Messengers wait outside and others bow deeply as they enter the presence of the vizier.

Near the centre of the opposite wall (*b*) Rekhmire performs his dual role of receiving taxes from officials who annually came with their dues, and receiving tributes from the vassal princes of Asia, the chiefs of Nubia, etc. The foreign gift-bearers are arranged in five rows: from the Land of Punt (dark skinned), from Crete (bearing vases of the distinctive Minoan type discovered on the island by Sir Arthur Evans), from Nubia, from Syria, and men, women and children from the South. The diverse and exotic tributes range from panthers, apes and animal skins, to chariots, pearls and costly vases, to say nothing of an elephant and a bear.

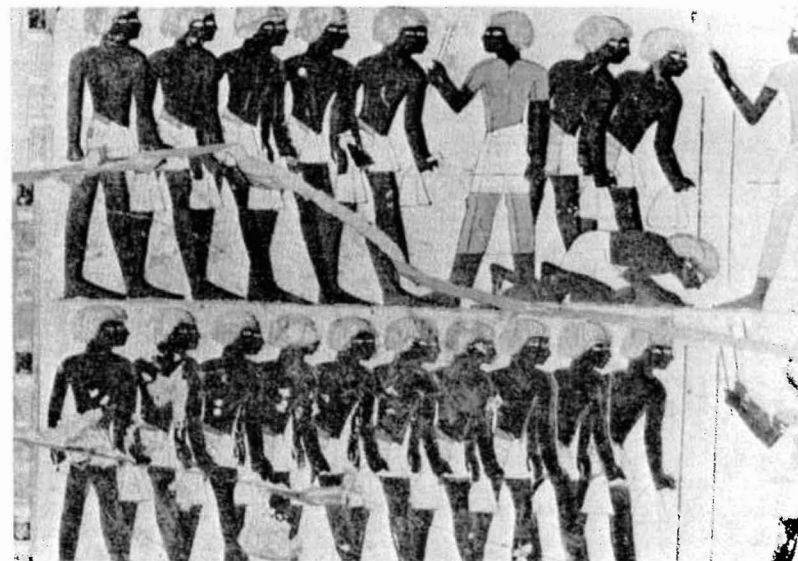
The inner corridor gives an insight into the activities of the times. On the left-hand wall (*c*) Rekhmire supervises the delivery

of corn, wine and cloth from the royal storehouses. He inspects carpenters, leather-workers, metal-workers and potters, who all came under his control. In the lower row is a somewhat damaged record for posterity of one of the most important tasks with which he was entrusted: supervising the construction of an entrance portal to the temple of Amon at Karnak. He held vigil over the manufacture of the raw material, the moulding of the bricks and their final use. Pylons and sphinxes, furniture and even household utensils all came under his control. There are interesting scenes, to the left of the bottom row, of seated and standing statues being given final touches by the artist before polishing. The fascinating detail provides a pictorial treatise on the different industries of the times.

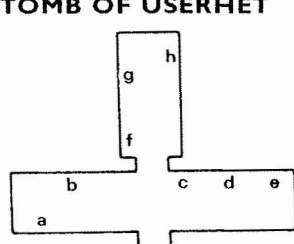
On the right-hand wall (*d*) Rekhmire may be seen at a table and there are traditional scenes of offerings before statues of the deceased, the deceased in a boat on a pond being towed by men on the bank, and a banquet with musicians and singers.

All the representations in this tomb show rhythm and free-posing, gesticulating and active figures. They are very different

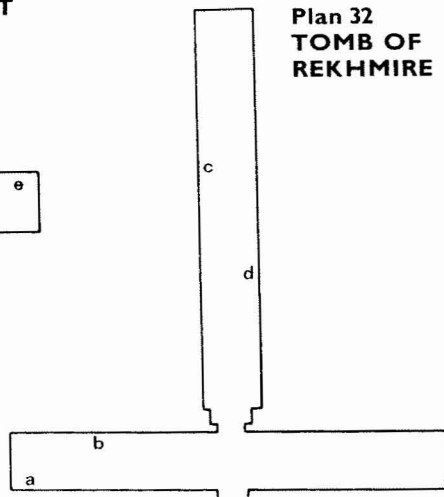
Bags of gold dust are brought to the supervisors, Tomb of Userhet.



**Plan 31
TOMB OF USERHET**



**Plan 32
TOMB OF
REKHMIRE**

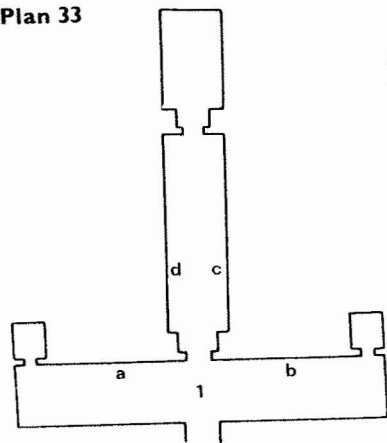


from the patterned group action with which we are familiar. The high premium traditionally set on balanced design was not lost. But the solid strings of people are gone, and with the break with the frieze the curtain is suddenly lifted on a picture of things as they really were: workers bending to mix mortar or squatting to carve a statue; a man who raises a bucket to his colleague's shoulder; another engrossed in carpentry; the elegant ladies of Rekhmire's household preparing for a social function with young female servants arranging their hair, anointing their limbs, bringing them jewellery. The message in these delightful murals is forceful and clear, with the dignified personage of the vizier himself towering over his subordinates in administrative excellence.

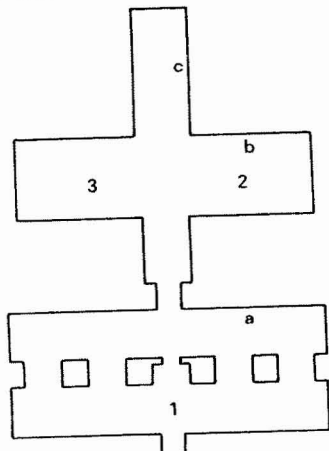
Tomb of Emunzeh (84): Plan 33

This is the tomb of the superintendent of granaries under Thutmose III and Amenhotep II. The condition is poor due largely to damage from the *felaheen* family who lived in it for many years and also due to pillage by grave-robbars.

TOMB OF EMUNZEH
Plan 33



Plan 34
TOMB OF AMENEMHEB



In the traverse first chamber (*r*) on the left-hand rear wall (*a*), African tribes bring tributes including gold, panther-skins, ivory and, among the animals, a small donkey clinging to the neck of a giraffe! On the right-hand wall (*b*) Asiatics bring weapons, jars, a carriage and white and brown horses.

On the right-hand side of the rear corridor (*c*) the deceased makes a tour of inspection of the produce of the estate. There is a scene of the hunt for wild animals in the desert, the chase of water-fowl and the usual offering scenes, but unfortunately most of the wall is in bad condition. The funerary scenes are on the left-hand wall (*d*).

The vaulted ceiling of the shrine is finely decorated.

Tomb of Amenemheb (85): Plan 34

This tomb has a line of pillars in the first chamber and side chambers leading off the main corridor directly behind it. It is important historically because Amenemheb was the military commander of Thutmose III, and not only does his tomb record his part in the Pharaoh's important Asiatic campaigns, but it gives exact information of the length of his reign and those of his predecessors.

Amenemheb is recorded as having accomplished two feats of unusual daring. One was during the battle of Kadesh on the Orontes when, just before the clash of arms as the opposing armies were poised and ready, the prince of Kadesh released a mare who galloped straight for the battle lines of the Egyptian army. The plan was to break up the ranks and confuse the soldiers but Commander Amenemheb, ever on the alert, reportedly leapt from his chariot, pursued the mare, caught it and promptly slew it.

The second experience took place on the return march from Asia Minor when near the Euphrates the Pharaoh was suddenly in danger of being run down by a herd of wild elephants. Amenemheb not only managed to divert the danger and save his master from a nasty fate but apparently struck off the trunk of the leader of the herd while balancing precariously between two rocks!

Naturally such a brave and dutiful warrior should be justly rewarded by his Pharaoh for his bravery and such nobles as Amenemheb received part of the booty, decorations, and in special cases even land in recognition of their services.

Three walls in this tomb are especially noteworthy. The first is in the main chamber (*r*) on the rear right-hand wall (*a*). This is the record of Thutmose III's Asiatic campaigns, his length of reign, etc., as well as a record of Amenemheb's military honours. Near

the bottom of the wall Syrians bring tribute. They wear white garments with coloured braiding and there are talkative children among them.

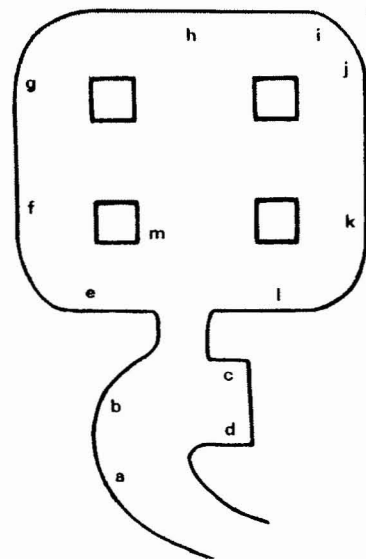
In the chamber leading off the corridor to the right (2) is a scene on the left-hand wall (*b*) of a feast in progress with abundant food and drink. Servants bring bunches of flowers. The guests, relaxing in comfortable chairs or squatting on stools, are offered refreshments and the ladies in the second row all hold lotus flowers in their hands, while round their necks and in their hair they have blossoms. Attendants hold staffs wreathed and crowned with flowers. Lower on the wall are harp, flute and lute-players. It is a gay and lively representation.

In the rear corridor on the left-hand wall (*c*) is the private garden of Commander Amenemheb. Fish swim in a pool surrounded by plants. The deceased and his wife are presented with flowers.

The funerary scenes are found in the left-hand chamber (3) which leads off the rear corridor.

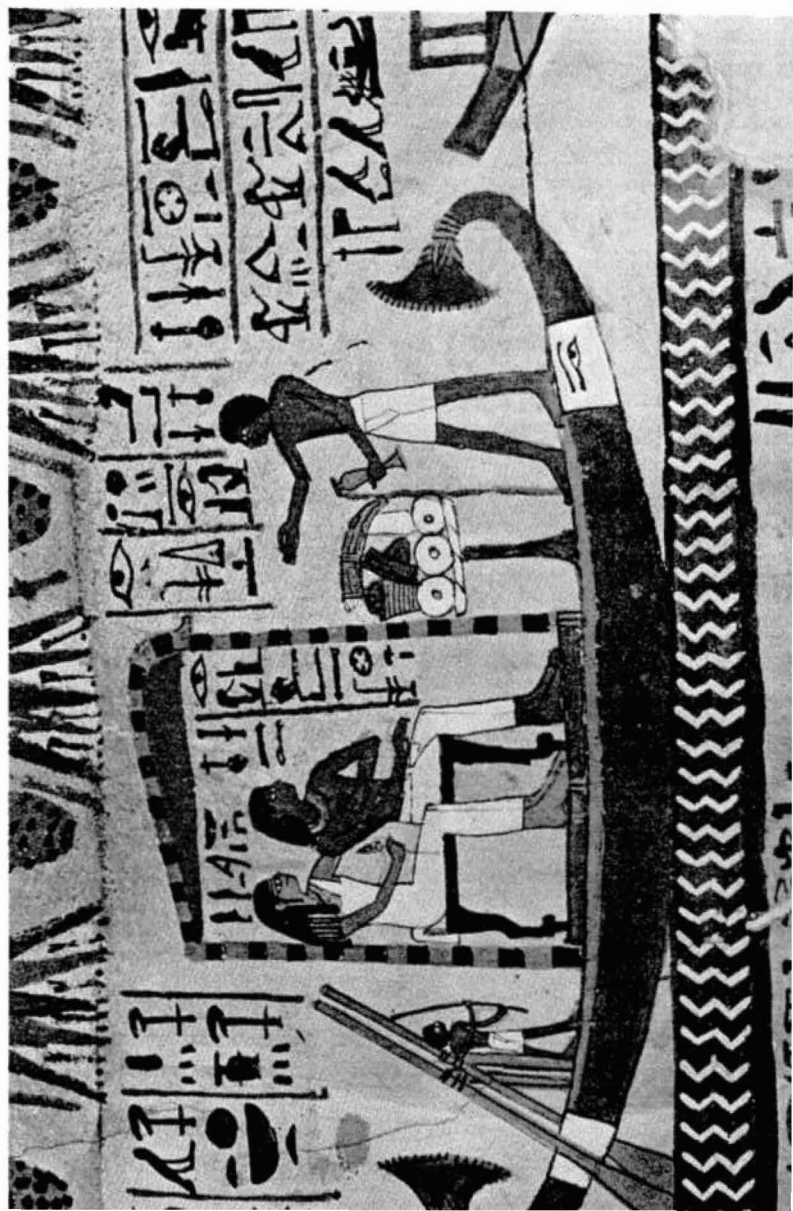
Tomb of Sennofer (96): Plan 35

In this delightful tomb the boxed-in effect has been broken. The



TOMB OF SENNOFER
Plan 35

Sennofer and his wife on the voyage to Abydos.



'oriental tent' atmosphere of most tombs is missing because the entire ceiling has been painted with a creeping vine. Interesting use has been made of the rough surfaces of the rock to make the grapes and vine-tendrils more realistic, and the experiment has succeeded. Both the first small chamber and the main hall, which is supported by four pillars, have been decorated in this manner.

Sennofer was the overseer of the gardens of Amon under Amenhotep II. His tomb, which was excavated only in the 20th century, was found to have mostly religious inscriptions but the condition of the frescoes is almost perfect and their freshness and beauty make the tomb a very special one.

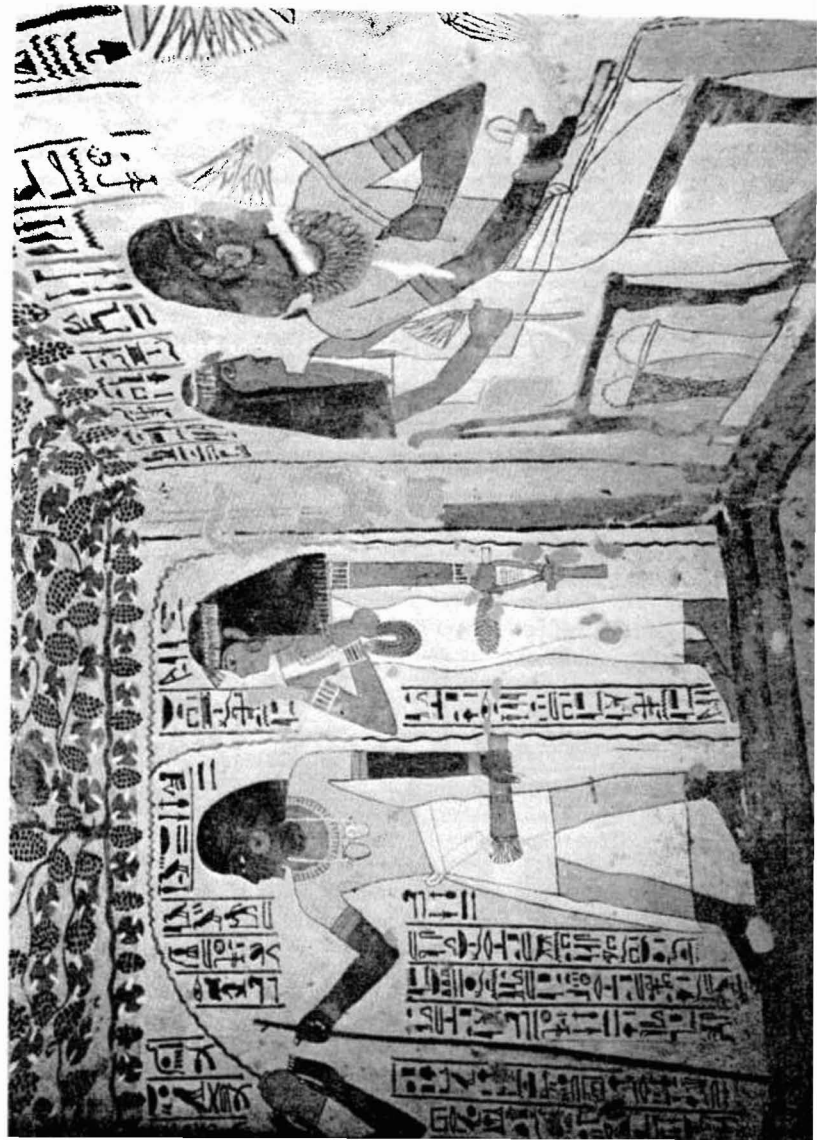
A steep flight of stairs takes us down to the first chamber, and the first representations we meet on the left-hand wall (*a*) show Sennofer being brought offerings from his daughter and ten priests. Circling the chamber clockwise we see on the two rear walls (*b* and *c*) drawings of the deceased with his wife worshipping Osiris who is represented above the doorway of the main chamber. On the right-hand wall (*d*) the deceased is seen entering and leaving his tomb while servants bring sacred offerings and his daughter stands behind him.

Above the doorway of the main chamber lie two representations of Anubis. Touring the chamber clockwise we come first to a scene of the deceased and his wife emerging from the tomb (*e*), and further along seated on a bench. On the left-hand wall at (*f*) are servants bringing furniture to the tomb and setting up two obelisks before the shrine. At (*g*) are funerary ceremonies and the nobleman himself (to the left) looks on. On the rear wall (*h*) the deceased and his wife are at a table of offerings while priests offer sacrifices to the dead. Further to the right (*i*) are scenes of the voyage to Abydos, statues of the deceased and his wife in a shrine in a boat being towed by another boat. Thus the deceased nobleman satisfied himself of favour with Osiris by showing that he had had the intention of performing the sacred pilgrimage.

One of the most beautiful representations is that of the deceased and his wife in an arbour (*j*) praying to Osiris and Anubis. At (*k*) a priest clad in a leopard skin purifies them with holy water and at (*l*) is the scene before a table of offerings where Sennofer puts a lotus blossom to his nostrils and his wife tenderly holds his leg.

The pillars have representations of Sennofer and his wife. Perhaps the most attractive is to be found on the left-hand pillar at (*m*).

The Tomb of Sennofer, Overseer of the Gardens of Amon.



UPPER ENCLOSURES

Tomb of Menna (69): Plan 36

This famous tomb of the scribe of the fields under Thutmose IV has some of the most beautiful representations to be found of harvests, feasts and hobbies. It is a fine tomb and the colours are brilliant, particularly on the ceiling of the inner chamber.

On the left-hand entrance wall (*a*) Menna can be seen before a table of offerings and further along the wall (*b*) are agricultural scenes with step-by-step portrayals of the grain being measured, recorded, winnowed and trodden. The ploughing and sowing is followed by reaping and, as in so many tombs, the artist has managed to add a human touch; in this case a young girl removing a thorn from a friend's foot (bottom row) and two girls quarrelling (immediately above). At (*c*) Menna stands before a ship coming in to dock with a cargo of stores.

On the left-hand wall of the rear corridor (*d*) are funerary scenes of the voyage to Abydos in fine detail and brilliant colour. Menna's heart is weighed before Osiris (the tongue of the balance has been destroyed). On the right-hand wall (*e*) is the famous fishing and fowling scene among the papyrus thickets. The deceased nobleman is enjoying his favourite pastime. Coloured fowl rise from the rushes. Crocodile, duck and assorted fish can be seen in the water. Menna's little daughter kneels to pluck a lotus flower from the rushes. The mural is a magnificent example of the importance laid on depicting good things for the hereafter. It is spoiled only by the fact that Menna's face has been carefully hacked out of the wall.

'The murals of the nobles' tombs have passed through three major eras of destruction. In very early times, when ancient tomb-robbers extracted the valuable funerary equipment, the enemies of the deceased also entered the chambers to destroy some of the happy representations that the deceased wanted to repeat in the hereafter. What other reason could there be for the severing of a boomerang, the destruction of a water-jar or the blinding of the eyes?

In the Christian era when many of the tombs were used as hideouts, some of the monks carefully plastered over the wall drawings and thus preserved them for us in excellent condition, while others scraped the distracting representations completely off the walls. At the turn of the 20th century, before proper security measures were enforced on the necropolis, antiquity dealers removed whole sections of the invaluable murals and some of the

most beautiful scenes may, consequently, be seen today in many of the museums of the world.

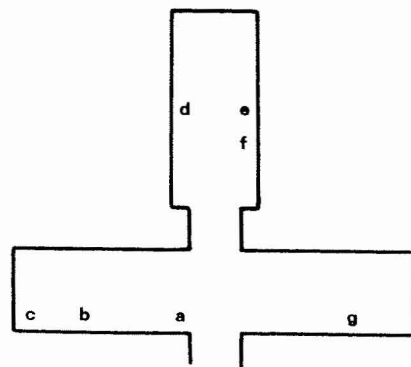
To the right of the fishing scene (*f*) is a ship (top row) from which one of the sailors leans over the side to fill a bowl of water from the river.

On the right-hand entrance wall (*g*) it can be seen that Menna usurped this tomb. Where his stucco has fallen off, the paintings of the original owner can be seen beneath. Perhaps it was the descendants of that owner who destroyed Menna's face as an act of vengeance.

Tomb of Intefoker (60): Plan 37

This is a regular 12th Dynasty tomb comprising a long entrance corridor before the main chamber. It belongs to the governor and vizier under Sesostri I and is one of the oldest tombs in this group. It is situated high on the mountain and commands a good view of the Nile Valley.

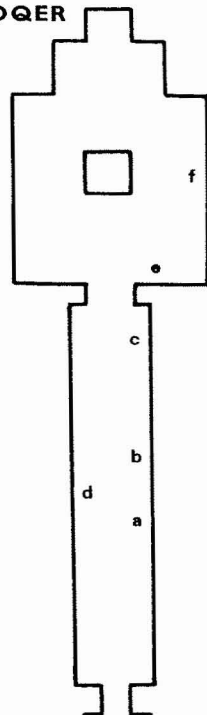
In contrast with the 18th Dynasty murals, these paintings are somewhat crude and carried out on rough plaster. They are nevertheless quaint and informative. On the right-hand wall of the main chamber (*a*) is a hunting scene with the deceased shooting game in an enclosure. The gazelles, hares, etc. are being chased by dogs. Birds are being netted and fish are being hauled in from a square pond of water. Just beyond the centre of the wall (*b*) is a series of cooking scenes and still further along (*c*) is a representation of Intefoker and his wife.

TOMB OF MENNA Plan 36

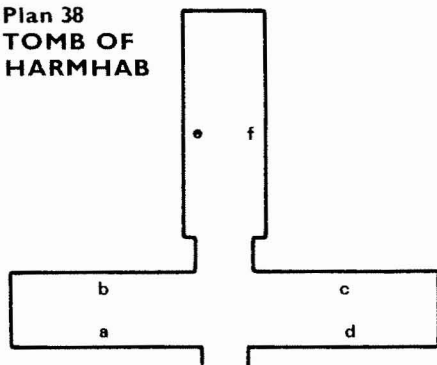
Towards the centre of the left-hand wall (*d*) is a fascinating representation of a funerary dance. It takes place before the deceased is brought to the tomb. The male performers have unusual reed crowns. They chant 'O Hathor—a newcomer' and 'She has inclined her head', the second chant indicating approval by the goddess of the deceased's entry to the underworld.

The inner chamber has a deep niche at the end, designed to hold Intefoker's statue (which has now been reconstructed). The burial shaft extends off this chamber. On the right-hand entrance wall (*e*) are musicians, both male and female. The offerings to the gods of the underworld are near the centre of the right-hand wall (*f*).

**Plan 37
TOMB OF INTEFOQER**



**Plan 38
TOMB OF
HARMHAB**



Menna and his family enjoy fishing and fowling in the hereafter.



Tomb of Harmhab (78): Plan 38

This nobleman was royal scribe, scribe of recruits and the official in charge of revenue in the reigns of Thutmose III, Amenhotep II, Thutmose IV and Amenhotep III. He should not be confused with the Pharaoh of the same name. His tomb comprises a traverse hall and a single long corridor.

On the left-hand entrance wall (a) the much damaged figures of Harmhab and his wife are being offered bowls by servants as female musicians play to them. On the left-hand rear wall (b) the deceased (obliterated) presents to the Pharaoh the contributions of the peasants. Above this scene are scribes registering the peasants who are arranged in groups headed by standard bearers. On the right-hand rear wall (c) foreign tributes are brought in by plumed Asiatics. Note that a group of negroes from the Sudan are women (upper row) who carry their babies in the well-known negro fashion, tied to their backs. On the lower wall is a gay scene of negroes dancing to a drum beat. On the right-hand entrance wall (d) is the familiar funerary feast with dancing and music.

The left-hand wall of the inner corridor (e) has the traditional funerary scenes. On the right-hand wall (f) is a much damaged fishing and fowling scene.

Tomb of Ineni (Enne) (81): Plan 39

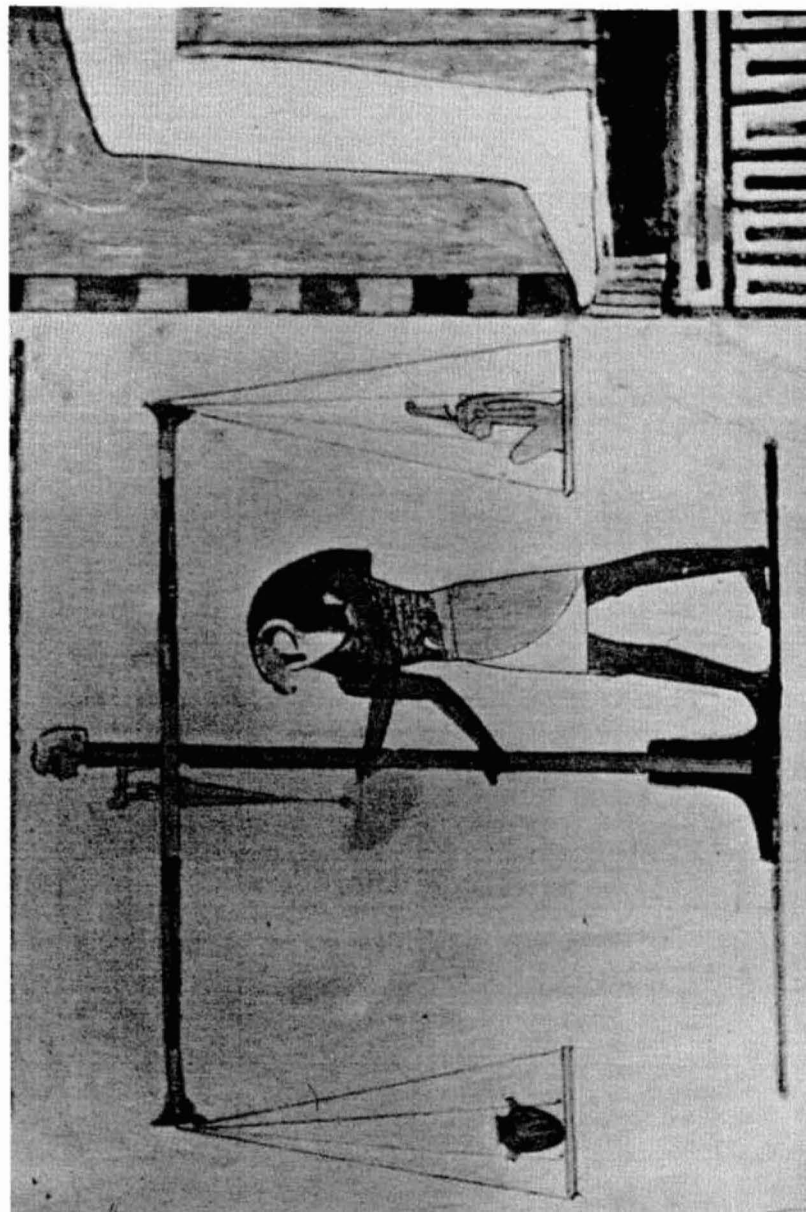
This was the architect who excavated the first tomb in the Valley of the Kings, that of Thutmose I. His tomb comprises a main chamber, the façade of which is formed of pillars which carry their murals on the rear faces, and a corridor.

Three of the square pillars carry particularly interesting murals. The first (a) is a hunting scene with a rearing hyena biting a broken arrow as a dog rushes the wounded creature from the rear and gazelles flee. The second (b) shows Ineni's country house and he and his wife are seen in the arbour (damaged) from whence he orders his gardener round the walled estate. On the third pillar (c) Ineni can be seen before a sumptuous feast.

On the left-hand rear wall of the first chamber (d) Ineni receives tributes from swarthy Nubians including two women who carry their babies on their backs (top row). Below he receives contributions from the peasants. This part of the mural is squared up for the draughtsman. On the right-hand wall (e) is a scene in poor condition of Ineni and his pet dog watching a parade of the estate animals including sheep, goats, flamingoes and geese.

On the left-hand wall of the rear corridor (f) Ineni and his wife

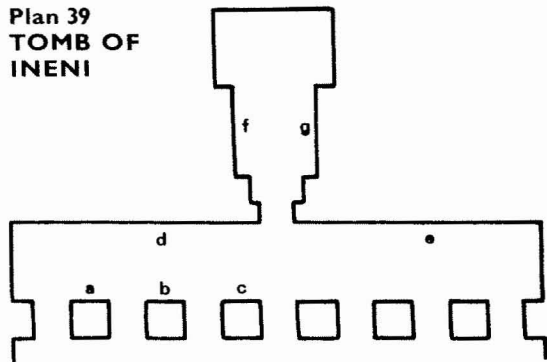
Thoth weighs the heart of the deceased against a figure of the Goddess of Justice and Truth, Tomb of Menna.



receive offerings. On the right-hand wall (*g*) are more funerary scenes and offerings. The roof is decorated.

In the niche at the rear are four seated statues of the deceased and his wife.

**Plan 39
TOMB OF
INENI**



Tomb of Menkheperasonb (86): Plan 40

This tomb was never completed. Only the regular traverse chamber was constructed and this has two small chambers projecting from the rear walls on either side. It belonged to the first prophet of Amon in the reign of Thutmose III, who was another of those masters-of-all in ancient Egypt who could as readily turn their hands to agriculture as to raising an obelisk.

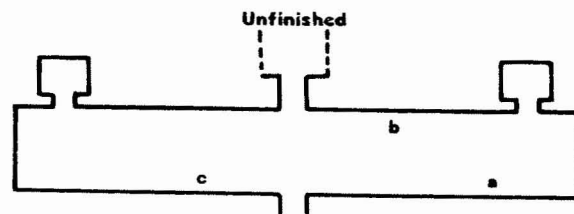
Towards the end of the right-hand entrance wall (*a*) craftsmen are at work on weapons, vases, etc. while gold for the inlay is being weighed out (upper reaches). The inscription records for posterity the fact that the illustrious Pharaoh Thutmose III actually designed some of the vessels himself, thus creating a precedent followed by several monarchs and statesmen!

On the right-hand rear wall (*b*) foreign envoys bring gifts ranging from gold and silver inlaid vases to diverse weapons, battledress and horses. The negroes wear loincloths, the Syrians their tradi-

tional braided robes. Having extended his empire Thutmose III was thus recorded as having homage paid him by the chieftains of Kheftiu, the Hittites, Tunip and Kadesh.

The left-hand entrance wall (*c*) has harvest scenes.

**Plan 40
TOMB OF MENKHEPERRASONB**



ASASIF

Tomb of Kheru-ef (192): Plan 41

The tomb of Kheru-ef is at present closed to visitors due to reconstruction.

Kheru-ef was steward to the Great Royal Wife Queen Tiy at the crucial period of the 18th Dynasty just before Amon was dethroned by Ikhnaton. The tomb was never completed but the murals are carved in exquisite high relief.

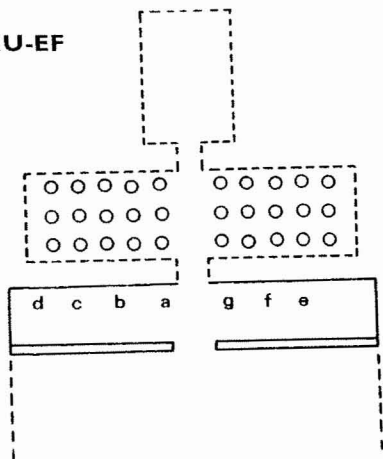
The outer courtyard contains various other tombs and a wall has been constructed to preserve the reliefs of Kheru-ef. On the left-hand wall are delightful scenes from the Sed festival, the 30-year Jubilee of the Pharaoh. Amenhotep III and Queen Tiy are seated

with Hathor behind them (*a*) watching a processional dance in their honour. Further along the wall (*b*) they leave the palace with eight slim princesses walking in pairs and bearing jars of sacred water. At (*c*) delightful carvings of the ceremonial dance suggest a ritual of rebirth of life on the earth and include a jumping bird, a flying bird and a monkey. In the lower row are musicians with flutes and drums. Towards the end of the wall (*d*) is a sketch of the high priest and the text describes the celebration.

The right-hand section of the wall is somewhat damaged. At (*e*) Amenhotep III is portrayed with his sixteen princes. With Queen Tiy he watches the erection of a column symbolising the god Osiris (*f*). At (*g*) the Pharaoh and Queen Tiy are shown with the deceased nobleman behind them. Beneath the trio are the conquered cities.

The other nobleman of this era, when the royal capital was being shifted to Tel el Amarna, was Ramose. But while Ramose followed his master to the new capital, Kheru-ef remained in Thebes with the royal mother.

Plan 41
TOMB OF KHERU-EF



DER EL MEDINA

Tomb of Sennutem (36): Plan 42

This is the tomb of the Servant in the Place of Truth in the early Ramesside period. The mural decoration, which had not yet

developed that stiffness that characterised the later Ramesside period, is in extremely good condition and the low curved roof is used to continue the themes of the side walls.

A narrow flight of stairs, followed by a curved flight, leads to this entrance of the tomb. On the wall opposite the doorway (from left to right) are: (*a*) Anubis embalming the mummy of the deceased, (*b*) Osiris before an offering table flanked by two Horus eyes, (*c*) offerings and perfumes and (*d*) the deceased being led by Anubis.

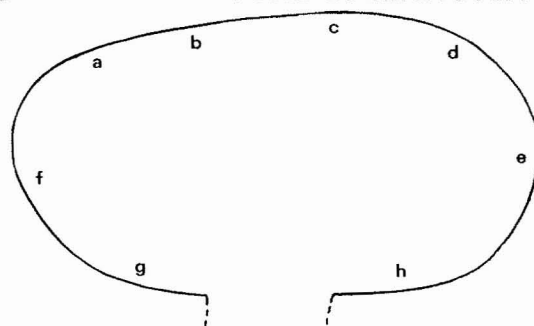
On the right-hand wall (*e*) is an agricultural scene with ripe wheat fields, fruits and flowers. In the lower row are ploughing scenes. On the opposite wall (*f*) is a delightful representation of the deceased nobleman and his wife, whose transparent dress reveals slender limbs.

On the roof are scenes of the opening of the door of the tomb, the journey to the underworld and chapters from the Book of the Dead, as well as the tree of life and the sacred spotted Apis bull.

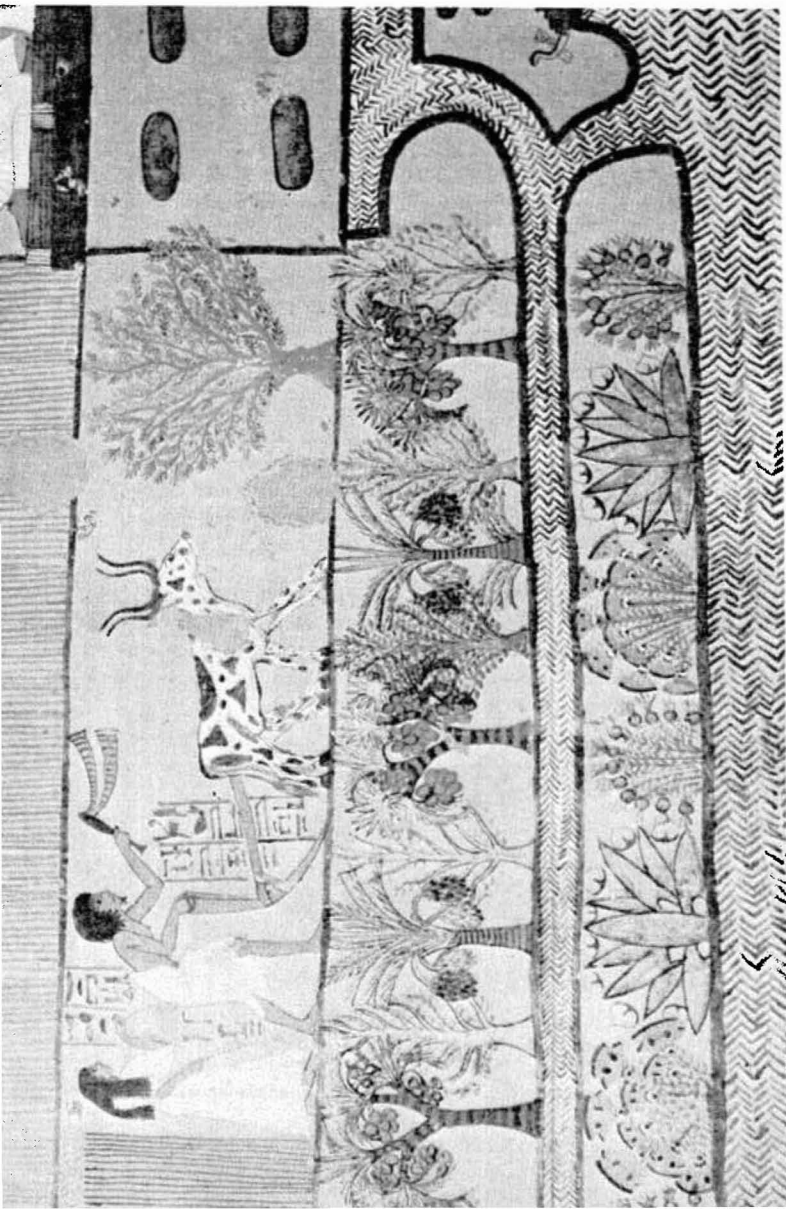
On the left-hand side of the doorway (*g*) is a scene showing the mummy of the deceased in the tomb with Nephthys and Isis in the form of birds and (lower row) the wife and daughter of the deceased. On the right-hand wall (*h*) are evil spirits and (lower row) the deceased and his family.

In this tomb one feels an intense intimacy with the deceased as he was during his life and as he carried his treasures and pleasures to his grave. Perhaps it is the fine condition of the murals that helps to create this feeling. Perhaps, and more likely, it is the very smallness of the tomb itself.

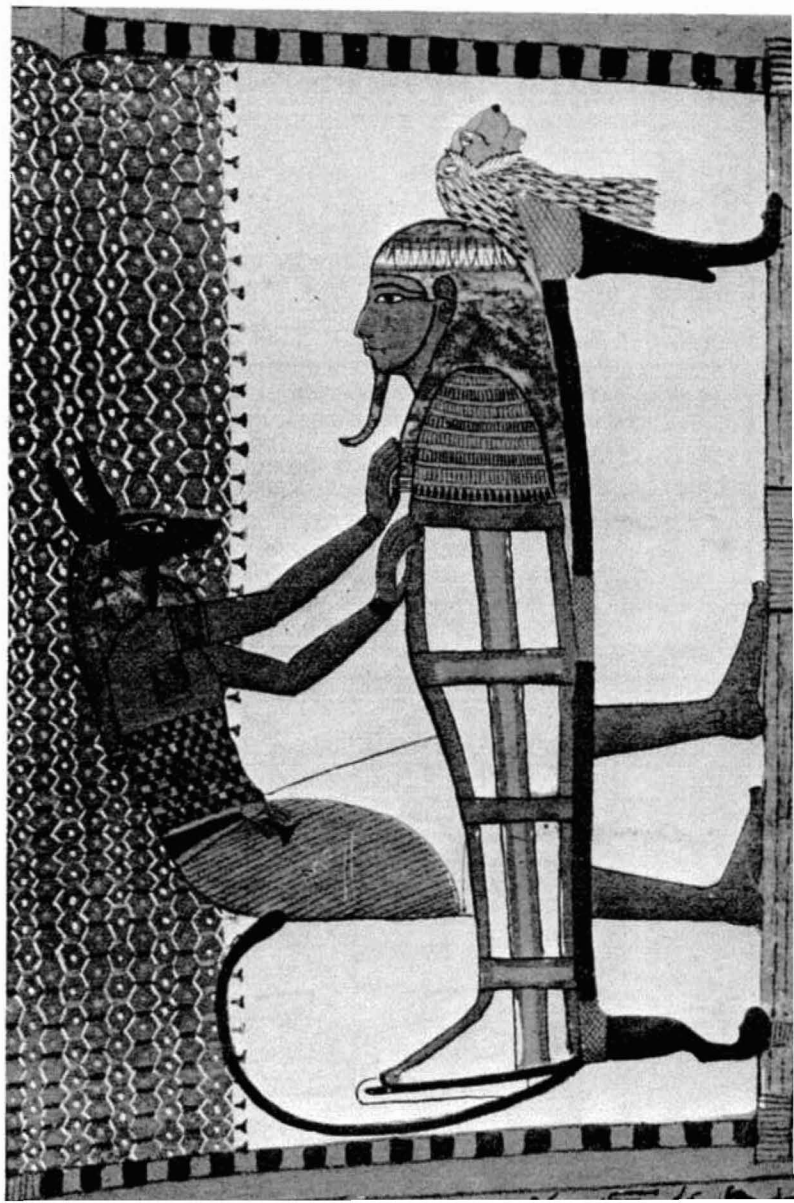
Plan 42
TOMB OF SENNUTEM



Scene from Tomb of Sennutem showing wheat fields, fruit and flowers in the hereafter.



Anubis embalms the deceased nobleman, Tomb of Sennutem.



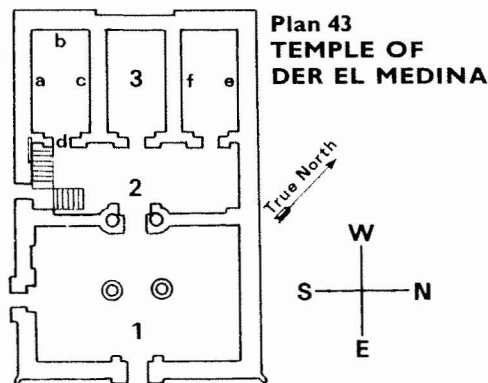
CHAPTER 9

THE TEMPLE OF DER EL MEDINA

The Temple of Der el Medina: Plan 43

This small, graceful Ptolemaic temple, completely surrounded by a brick wall, is thought to have been originally founded by the architectural genius under Amenhotep III known as Amenhotep son of Hapu. It lies in a barren hollow and was dedicated to Hathor and Maat. It took shape under the Ptolemies. Within its precincts Christian monks built a monastery the remains of which can be seen to the left and right of the temple. It was these monks who gave it its name.

The temple consists of a large vestibule (1) containing two elaborately adorned palm-columns with floral capitals and a screen wall dividing it from a central hall (2) and the back of the temple where there are three shrines. Here, as in so many temples in the Nile Valley, the pure lines of Egyptian work and the elaborated Graeco-Egyptian style are found side by side.



Passing through the entrance doorway of the temple we notice steep rocks. The façade, which has a hollow cornice, bears names which attest to the many Copts and Greeks who visited the temple. Facing us are the two palm columns and behind them the screen walls with pillars bearing heads of Hathor. Near the top of the wall on the left is a window which once lighted a staircase.

In the left-hand shrine on the left-hand wall (a) is a chapter from the Book of the Dead showing Osiris seated (near the end of the wall) and before him four genii of the dead upon a lotus flower. Thoth inscribes the verdict. To the left the heart of the deceased (Philopator) is weighed by Anubis and Horus in one of the most complete representations of this scene to be found, and also one of the most beautiful. With the 42 judges of the dead (upper row) the deceased is led to the scene of the judgement by Maat who, in another representation and joined by Anubis and Horus, weighs the heart of the deceased against the feather of truth. Note that Anubis and Horus not only measure the weight but test the scales; Horus himself checks the balance; Thoth records the result. If it proves satisfactory then the deceased enters the underworld, if unsatisfactory he will be devoured by the hippopotamus-like monster before him.

On the rear wall (b) the deceased offers incense to Osiris and Isis. On the right-hand wall (c) is the sacred boat with standards, etc. Above the doorway (d) is a four-headed ram representing the God of the Four Winds and above this strange creature a flying vulture worshipped by four goddesses. On the jambs of the doorway the Pharaoh is represented with three hawk-headed and three jackal-headed genii.

In the centre shrine (3) are representations of the deceased before the various Theban deities.

In the right-hand shrine on the right-hand wall (e) are fine carvings of seated deities: Osiris with Hathor, Isis, Horus, Nephthys and Anubis behind him. On the left-hand wall (f) are Mut, Amon-Ra, etc.

South of the temple of Der el Medina is the settlement of tomb and temple workers (page 70). The cemetery lies to the west.

CHAPTER 10 CONCLUSION

INCLUDING PROJECTS SCHEDULED FOR THE SEASON 1975/76

Archaeologists believe that the soil of Egypt conceals as much as ever came out of it. Though most discoveries will undoubtedly be made in Sakkara, the Fayoum and the Delta, some important finds have been made in Luxor in recent years.

For example, electricians, burying electric cables beneath the flagstones of the great court of Karnak temple for the 'Son et Lumière' performances, unearthed a sloping ramp leading to a jetty. This was where the sacred boats of Amon, hitherto assumed to have been carried to the river by priests, were launched for their journey during the Opet festival. And some foundation deposits at the four corners of the pyramid of Mentuhotep at Del el Bahri were found to contain unique miniatures in green faience. This very rare and complete collection contains samples of all the implements used by the architects of the time, in addition to some tiny inscribed tablets dating from the erection of the monument.

Are there any royal tombs yet undiscovered in the Valley of the Kings? What of the Queens? The wives of Ramses II's eight successors of the same name, for example? Or the royal offspring who died at a tender age? Or noblemen? What sort of story will the walls of Ikhnaton's reconstructed temples tell of the era of sun-worship at Luxor? Might there be another hidden 'cache' in the precincts of Karnak? Or another dismantled temple?

Such questions as these draw archaeologists to Luxor year after year. Work continues with the momentum and international fervour of the previous century. But now it combines excavation with documentation, conservation and reconstruction. The 1975/76 archaeological season starts in October.

The following teams continue work in Luxor:

1. The Austrian Archaeological Institute, who have been excavating in Asasif for several seasons, discovered the hitherto unknown tomb of Ankh-Hor, which dates to the Late Period. A mummy and parts of several sarcophagi with the names of

relatives were found in it. As with most other tombs in the south Asasif area, the poor quality of the rock made it impossible for the relief sculptors to work directly on the walls. Instead, limestone blocks were cut, fitted to the wall and duly inscribed. The tomb was never finished and, moreover, a large number of the inscribed blocks are missing, but work on reconstruction and conservation will be continued.

2. A Belgian archaeological team, excavating in the north Asasif area, discovered the Saitic tomb of Padi-Horresnet, on which clearance and documentation will continue: a task complicated by the fact that fragments of murals from other tombs are being found in it.
3. The University of Chicago's Epigraphic Survey, having completed a 50-year long study of Medinet Habu, are carrying out the first complete recording of Seti I's battle reliefs on the northern (outer) wall of the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak. In the process they have located a hidden wall on which these important historical scenes continue. They have also started a new documentation of the 'Feast of Opet' in Luxor Temple. Projects for the coming season include the first map of the Theban necropolis since 1921 and a series of Handbooks to monuments in the Luxor area.
4. The Egyptian Centre for Documentation is preparing publication of two volumes on the mortuary temple of Ramses II, the Ramasseum: one on the reliefs of his battles against the Hittites of Syria, including the storming of the fortresses of Tulip and Zapur, and the other to contain a plan and description of the rear north-western granaries and storerooms of the temple, where unusual mud-brick statues were found in a columned hall.

In the Valley of the Queens, clearing or recording will continue in many tombs, including those of several of Ramses II's sons and those of the wives and daughter of Ramses II. Clearance of the tomb of Yuyi, Ramses II's mother, will continue, and the full text and description of the tomb of Amon-Hir-Khopshef will be published.

Among the tombs to be cleared and studied at Kurna is that of Thay, a government official who started his career under Ramses II and continued under Merneptah (believed by some scholars to be the Pharaoh during whose reign the Exodus took place). The fragments of murals of this unique tomb will be studied and recorded.

5. The Franco-Egyptian Centre at Karnak will enter its eighth season. Among various undertakings which include excavations and the preservation of monuments, one of the most urgent projects is to continue to study the progressive deterioration of monuments through water seepage, humidity and salt erosion, and to take steps to prevent further destruction. Until the last decade the causes of damage were not fully understood and, in fact, specialists working for the Centre have had to revise some previously held views, as, for example, the misconception that there was no humidity in Upper Egypt and that damage was caused by subterranean seepage only. The elements involved having been established, methods to curb deterioration are being experimented on. Many modern methods of conservation which have proved satisfactory in other countries have appeared to be less so in the case of Egypt's monuments, where the natural process of evaporation of moisture must be allowed but crystallisation be curbed. Specialists are extremely optimistic and will continue to carry out trials next season.

It is interesting to learn that the High Dam has, to a certain extent, improved conditions for the conservation of monuments. Before 1964 the difference between low and high flood was seven to ten metres. This resulted, time and again, in monuments being flooded, the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak sometimes being swamped to a depth of one metre. Today, with the control of irrigation water, there is a difference of only about two metres, and although the average level is higher than before the overall conditions have improved. The murals on the lower walls are not decaying so rapidly from salt erosion caused by excessive wetting and drying out every year, and steps can more easily be taken to reinforce undermined foundations and to prevent the further collapse of large structures.

6. The French Institute of Oriental Archaeology will continue to excavate and carry out epigraphic studies at Karnak North next season. In endeavouring to establish the strata and the ground plans of earlier monuments, the team located the sandstone pavement of a temple of Thutmose I.

On the west bank of the Nile, at Der el Medina, the Institute has completed half a century of excavations of the village which was occupied by workers engaged in excavating and decorating the royal tombs of the Valley of the Kings. A publication of the findings is now being prepared. This will be a unique study, since the family histories of each of the inhabitants of the

village can be traced from generation to generation throughout the span of nearly three centuries, with full details of their daily activities, religious ceremonies, marriages and even the antagonisms and jealousies of the community.

7. The German Archaeological Institute have been carrying out various projects in the Luxor area for over a decade. In the coming season work will continue on the documentation and restoration of the 26th dynasty tomb of Ibi in Asasif, where they located the burial chamber and hitherto unrecorded representations, such as the astronomical ceiling. Restoration of Ibi's tomb includes the replacing of fragments of reliefs discovered by the Belgian archaeological team excavating the tomb of Padi-Horresnet immediately to the east. Suitable provisions for public admission to the tomb of Ibi will probably be made.

Work will also continue in the El-Tarif area, the northernmost point on the Theban necropolis where the princes of the Intef family of the 9th and 10th dynasties were buried. Last year, during excavations of this site, two mud-brick mastabas dating to the 4th dynasty and of a type hitherto unknown in the Theban area were located. A survey last season indicated that there are more tombs of the so-called *saff* type in the area.

Germany's most recent trial project is to apply a technique known as photogrammetry for the documentation of the reliefs of the mortuary temple of Seti I at Kurna. Photogrammetry is usually applied to document architecture; it was used, for example, for the restoration and relocation of the temples at Abu Simbel. The German team will now use it also to document reliefs. The technique of photogrammetry is, roughly, to obtain a pair of stereo-photographs which, by means of special apparatus, will project a three-dimensional, undistorted picture of the subject. This can then be utilised for plotting to whatever scale or plan may be required. Photogrammetry should provide means for quicker, more accurate and more economical documentation which, in turn, can also enable precise and accurate restoration to be done. The trial run last season was encouraging.

8. A Japanese archaeological team, excavating in Malqatta, south-west of Medinet Habu, have discovered a staircase of Amenhotep III leading to his Heb Sed Court. They will continue working in the area during the coming season.
9. The University of Pennsylvania has taken out a concession to

clear and conserve a series of Late New Kingdom tombs of the Dra abu el-Naga area. They will also continue to excavate the palace of Amenhotep III at Malqatta, where they have already unearthed a large quay. This was where the royal barge was moored at the edge of a riverine harbour.

10. The Universities of Pennsylvania and Toronto continue to sponsor the reconstruction by computer of Ikhnaton's Sun Temple from thousands of blocks extracted from various sites within the precincts of Karnak Temple. At the beginning of the coming season they will excavate outside the western gate in an effort to locate the source of the blocks and the original site of the temple.
11. The Polish Archaeological Institute will continue reconstruction of the magnificent mortuary of Queen Hatshepsut at Der el Bahri as well as a structure of Thutmose III above the third tier.

LUXOR MUSEUM

The new Museum at Luxor, to be opened in 1976, is situated on the river's edge about half-way between the great temples of Luxor and Karnak. It has been designed by one of Egypt's leading architects to display works of art from three main sources: from the temples of Luxor and Karnak, from storehouses containing treasures excavated from both sides of the Nile in Luxor, and some selected pieces from the Cairo Museum.

Visitors to this air-conditioned museum, on two levels under a single roof (a ramp leads to the upper gallery), will be attracted by effectively illuminated works of art, offset against near-black walls. The creation of individual vistas at strategic positions will encourage an organised, uninterrupted flow of people through the museum, and prevent the tendency to double back and congest the space.

To the rear of the main hall of the Museum, a few stairs lead to a long gallery where two masterpieces (the recently found red granite head of Sesostri I, and the great stone stele of Mentuhotep II flanked by two recently found statues) become the first focal point. Effective lighting will encourage visitors to bypass the Information Well to the right and to make their way towards these displayed objects.

After the major work of art and the major relief, the next focal point is the magnificent alabaster statue of Amenhotep III, seated beside, and under the protection of, Sobek, the Crocodile-god. This, the largest free standing statue in the museum, is half-way up

the gallery. In approaching it visitors pass on the right the famous stele narrating how Kamose conquered the Hyksos (p. 37), and various other works of art from the Theban area on the left.

From the centre of the gallery, attention is drawn once more towards illuminated objects at the end of the gallery, where a ramp leads to the upper floor and commands an excellent view of the lower gallery.

The first important work of art on the upper floor is one of the two famous statues of Amenhotep, son of Hapu; it is individually illuminated. On the short wall are some blocks, carved in relief, from the famous red-granite shrine of Hatshepsut, taken from the restricted area of Karnak Temple (see Plan 4); and, as one makes the turn, one's attention is immediately drawn to another work of major importance: the head of the Pharaoh Ikhnaton which introduces the Amarna Period (pp. 142/143).

On the upper gallery of Luxor Museum is one of the finest reconstructions of modern times: the famous 'Ikhnaton Wall', an 18-metre wall reconstructed from 300 of the 6,000 blocks of Ikhnaton's Sun Temple extracted by the Franco-Egyptian Centre at Karnak from Harmhab's ninth pylon (p. 60). The wall is a record of some aspects of everyday life during the period of sun worship and has been so constructed that newly-discovered or identified pieces can be systematically added to the wall.

A display area for small objects, such as jewellery, faience vessels and items of adornment, is situated immediately above the Information Well on the ground floor. The second ramp leads the visitors downwards towards the well, the main feature of which is a relief map of the various temples and monuments of Luxor, on a large scale, illuminated by press buttons to show 'Where you are'.

One of the unique features of Luxor Museum is the huge slab, or slatted wall, along its outer face, which separates and enhances the building proper. This serves to keep the museum cool and creates, at the same time, a colonnade where statues will be displayed and illuminated at night. Several large stone works will be exhibited in the grounds of the Museum also, as for example the famous stele of Amenhotep II, one of the finest single examples of relief (photo on page 65).

Another important feature of the Museum, apart from the various storage areas, offices, reference library and study areas, is the Staging Area where the majority of works of art will be prepared for mounting and cleaning. The ticket-booth leads to an outdoor cafeteria overlooking the Nile on the south side of the Museum.